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COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM VIS-A-VIS THE PRESENT EDUCATION SCENARIO

A.K. BHATTACHARYYA

The *PROBLEM* daunting the educational planners in India today is that of equalization of educational opportunities for all children in the country. In spite of the most sincere efforts of the Governments, schools have cleverly retained their class-identities and are advancing in unequal space, the best ones favouring the affluent community with all modern educational facilities thereby separating other schools as not-so-good. This is an unhappy co-existence that deserves a close look.

Education in India today is regarded and propagated as a means to an end, a passport to employment, an equipment for national development. Exclusive emphasis on practical utility has turned education into a saleable commodity, the quality of which differs according to the demands and paying capacity of the customers, i.e. the guardians. English-medium education enjoying the highest employment potentiality is alluring the affluent to its fold, thus depriving the ordinary schools of support from that corner. The '*social segregation*' of schools has assumed such a serious proportion that '*common school system*' and '*neighbourhood schools*' are now drawing attention even three decades after their official advocacy.

SOURCES of the problem are not difficult to locate. Leaders of the Indian renaissance found in the Western model of education a panacea for all the evils of traditional Indian life, and wanted to mould the Indian mind after this model. Costly English schools were set up as well as their cheap popular editions, thus creating an unhealthy co-existence of two types of schools: the costly English ones meeting the educational needs of the urban affluent and the cheap ones educating others. Growing importance of English in all spheres of Indian public life gave English-medium education a further boost, which is still continuing.

Gandhi's Basic education sought to offer an alternative model, but it has few takers today. The R K Mission Vidyalyays and the Viswa Bhaati reflect Swami Vivekananda's and Rabindranath's educational thoughts, but only tailored to the tune of the so-called '*life-centric*', commercially viable, employment-oriented Western model. India has long waited to evolve her own model which would bring the classes and the masses closer together.

SOLUTION to this problem lies not merely in the revision of curriculum or in the expansion of education. It needs a global approach to identify the factors that have so far impeded the even growth of Indian education, and to suggest remedial measures the following points deserve attention

1. English is not an indigenous mother tongue, nor is it included in the eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The Kothari Commission regarded it only as a '*library language*'. So English-medium schools, which are a blatant refusal to accept this reality, should be gradually discouraged and derecognized, thereby ending this long colonial legacy. This will bring down the employment-potentiality of English-medium background and the craze for English-medium schools will automatically die down.
2. Selection procedures for all lucrative jobs being heavily biased in favour of candidates with English-medium background, others are being deprived for no fault of their own. This bias should be done away with. Tests of verbal ability should be simplified so that applicants from even remote rural areas can sit for the tests confidently without help from the costly coaching centres in spoken English or '*good*' English.
3. The poor teaching of English and other subjects in all ordinary secondary schools is a principal reason for the ambitious guardians' aversion to these schools. So all possible steps should be taken to improve these schools.
4. The practice of regarding some schools as '*quality institutions*' implies labelling other schools as bad or of lower quality. Kothari Commission favoured this practice. This attitude has to be changed. The Indian Constitution regards all citizens as equal, and therefore it is against the spirit of the Constitution that some children will be lucky to enter the quality institutions while others will be dumped into institutions of lower quality. Development of a child's IQ continues till the school leaving age, and hence it is unscientific to provide them with unequal educational facilities at the primary or lower secondary stage. All secondary schools should be treated as equal and the Government should see that no individual school acquires property like school-bus or computer which are not available to numerous other secondary schools in the country.
5. The '*neighbourhood school*' concept as propagated by the Kothari Commission needs to be translated into practice with suitable legislation. All guardians, irrespective of their socio-economic status, should be required to send their children to schools nearest to their residence. No one will dispute the Commission's assertion that this '*will compel the rich, privileged and powerful classes to take an interest in the system of public education and thereby bring about its early improvement*'

These changes will create a favourable social atmosphere for the introduction of a '*common school system*' and stop the segregation of Indian children on the basis of their parents' class-identity.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM - SOME SUGGESTIONS

AJAY PHALNIKAR

A. PREAMBLE

- 01 This article refers to a public invitation from the NCERT on prospective measures for practising common school system
REF The advertisement published in The Times of India, Mumbai edition dated Wednesday, 22/10/1977, Page no 24
- 02 As of today, schools in India are classified into three categories as follows
 - a> Those owned and run by the government or municipalities
 - b> Those owned and run by private bodies with financial assistance/grant from government
 - c> Those owned and run by private bodies but without financial assistance/grant from government
- 03 However, this has given a lot of variation in administration of schools. Myself, the writer of this article, wish to put forward some suggestions as remedial measures

B. SUGGESTIONS

- 01 A few decades ago, insurance business was nationalised to overcome and eliminate the grievances of policy-holders. On the same lines, it is absolutely essential to nationalise the entire school education system including ownership and management of all the individual schools in India
- 02 All the schools should be brought under full ownership and management by the exchequer (i.e. municipalities or such other similar public bodies). Private ownership and management of schools should not be allowed and be declared as a criminal offence
- 03 All the schools in India should have exactly **SAME SYLLABUS AND SAME TEXT-BOOKS** for respective standards
- 04 However, the medium of instructions will be different in different states. Strictly speaking, local language of respective states should be made mandatory as the medium of instructions (i.e. the first language)
05. Students from all the schools in India should be allowed exactly identical uniform (dress)
- 06 All these measures are required to ensure that students, who are supposed to become responsible citizens in the future, are convinced that all of them are receiving exactly same education and identical treatment at any school in India
- 07 There should be a national standard on facilities required in any school viz area of class-rooms, lighting, ventilation, sitting layout, distance between rows of benches and blackboard, safety aspects (including emergency exit), toilet facilities, availability of water (for drinking and for sanitation purpose), library and reading rooms for teachers, playground for students, number of students per classroom and per teacher, durations of classroom hours, lunch-time and playground hours and such other aspects. This list gives an indication of the idea and can be extended to cover many more topics

08. Actual design and construction will be taken care of by professional architects by taking into account local landscapes and local climatic conditions.
09. The Bureau of Indian Standards can be the official body for formulation of such national standard which needs to be enforced by way of statutory provisions
10. The present system of principal or head-master needs to be replaced by appointment of a **GENERAL MANAGER** for each school, who will be a specialist in professional management of schools rather than a specialist in teaching
11. Thus there should be special training programmes for such prospective managers on the lines of MBA degree programmes. Such programmes need to be developed and conducted by a national body similar to those for IAS or CA's or CWA's, which will again ensure uniformity in training and inter-changeability of individual trained persons.
12. There should be training programmes for parents of students on the subject of **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN OR WARDS AND SCHOOLS**. These need not be necessarily classroom training programmes. They can be voluntary and in the form of correspondence programme or self-study material in the print form or audio-visual cassettes etc or such other means. We can not assume that all the parents are fully aware about their responsibilities, hence this suggestions
13. There should be a practice of conducting either quarterly or half-yearly audits of all the schools by **REPRESENTATIVES OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS**, who would have been well trained for conducting such audits and reporting thereon. Such audits will be different from financial audits and education process and implementation activities will be the focus of attention. However, financial audits can also be covered under its scope
14. The reports on such audits submitted to concerned government department (for school education) will be used for investigation for confirmation of malpractices or constructive activities or the need for taking some corrective actions, as the case may be. This will introduce active interaction between parents and school management authorities and reduce direct workload of periodic inspection done by government department under present practice
15. Since all the schools will be brought under ownership and management by government body, it will become comparatively easier to identify possible problems due to likely increase in the number of new entrants at K G or montessory level and take necessary actions to accommodate all such entrants. Thus, parents also will be relieved of their tension about school-admissions for their children/wards and related issues like interviews of kids or parents, donations etc

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS

01. Under present system, schools under ownership and management by government bodies (like municipalities) are disliked by parents and they favour privately managed schools for their children
02. This results in fleeing away from the problems encountered in municipal schools and more and more negligence of the same, instead of eliminating those problems permanently
03. Consequently, the contrast of learning conditions (financial and non-financial) in privately managed schools against those in municipal schools leads to dissimilar attitudes of students completing education from these two categories of schools. Of course, this is not the only reason behind it and there are definitely many more reasons outside the educational system also, discussion on which is beyond the scope of this article

04. I have made an attempt to put forward some measures that, in my personal opinion, will help improve the situation to much extent. Ultimately, individual citizens also need to play a *DECISIVE ROLE* on such a subject, which is much more important than reports of pay-commission for sectors other than school-education

THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM : ELITIST EDUCATION FOR PRIVILEGED CLASS I

AKSHOY KUMAR SINGHA

INTRODUCTION

After fifty years of independence, our children have little to celebrate as we have failed to universalise primary education and to develop an education system for promoting social and national integration. One school of policy makers advocates for *making primary education compulsory* while the other solicits for improving the quality of education. These two issues are extremely dialectic as the quantitative and meant for the mass, while the latter is qualitative and meant for a few.

The paper tries to analyse various aspects of the Common School System (CSS) on the ground realities in existing system. The section-I outlines the proposed CSS, section-II deals with the weakness of the existing system, section-III examines education in liberalization era and an analysis of the possible impacts is in conclusion.

I. COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

It is the responsibility of the educational system to bring the different social classes and groups together and thus to promote the emergence of an egalitarian society. Instead of doing so, education itself is tending to increase social segregation and to perpetuate and widen class distinction [Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66]. To eliminate these evils, the proposed CSS or public education aims at offering equal educational opportunity to all irrespective of class, caste, creed and sex. The CSS will be open to all, and access will depend not on income class but on 'talent'. It will maintain quality teaching without any tuition fees, with the objective of social and national integration for national development.

II. THE WEAKNESS OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM

Over the decades, India's educational progress has been outclassed by many developing countries. In primary education, India has been worse than the average of

poorest countries. About one third of our children have not yet enrolled at primary level, about one third of the enrolled children dropped-out before completing four years of primary education. Three major drawbacks in the existing system are unequal achievements in the society, deterioration in quality, and failure to promote social and national integration.

The education policies followed so far, have promoted educational inequality within the country, between urban and rural, girls and boys, the rich and the poor, forward and backward castes and landless and landed classes. The present system has an inherent bias in favour of children from the rich as against that of the poor. The illiteracy among the mass while higher education among the few have created a gap in the society which in turn perpetuates and reinforces other social inequalities.

The quality of primary education, in rural India, is deplorable due to the infrastructural bottlenecks, insufficiency of teachers and their non-accountability. In such a situation, imparting education became impossible and children became *'not interested in education'*. It has hampered enrollment, dropout became frequent, the brilliant students felt bored, and even general students played during school hours. So the children can not read or write even after completing a few years of schooling. Despite deterioration in quality, the mass have no other option but to send their children to low quality government schools while the rich *'buy'* education from high quality private schools.

The education is supposed to promote egalitarian tendencies to prepare ground for social change. But, too great a disparity in educational achievement has accentuated social and ethnic tensions, jeopardised national unity, political stability, and consequently hampered overall development. The segregation among the children of the rich and the poor begins on the basis of differences in schooling quality and medium of instruction.

III. ECONOMIC REFORMS AND REFORMING EDUCATION

In most developing countries, the education system has resulted in growing mismatch between what schools produce and what economy needs. The recent attempts to open up market in India has been justified primarily in the expectation of economic growth and efficiency. But the opportunities offered by the market may be

difficult to use when the mass of the people remain illiterate. Is the elitist education essential in utilising new technology for re-engineering economic growth?

Under the Structural Adjustment Programs, the reduction in education expenditure usually hard hits the downtrodden. UNICEF (1992) reported that the attempt to adjust economies to debt crisis led to a fall in school enrolment among 6-11 year olds and in at least 50 of most debt burdened countries of developing world. The World Bank is concerned with the introduction of 'user fees' to generate more funds for improving and establishing more schools. Does the introduction of CSS aim at optimal funding and its best utilisation? But such a move tends to under-provide education to the masses in the existing socio-economic structure. We feel that, what little has been achieved so far, despite bureaucratic controls, inefficiencies and unequalising influences, would not have been possible if it were left to laissez faire.

CONCLUSION

Intellectuals and political leaders endorse that the real answer to the existing social inequality is making primary education compulsory. The inequality in educational achievements among the social classes was partly due to the continual dominance of the upper strata. The lower strata was also not interested in education as the opportunity cost of child labour may not be compensated by free education and free textbooks. The grassroot leaders fear that if people become literate, they will not simply follow them.

In the State regime we have demanded greater literacy of disadvantaged groups to increase their ability to resist oppression, to organize politically and to get a fairer deal. In the market paradigm, the reforming education tries to maximize the effectiveness of the available resources. In tackling government expenditure, are we going to produce a limited qualitative elites rather than the literate mass? In the given social structure, the selection of talented student might ration the access to the poor while assuring better chance to the rich. It means that, talented student of the privileged class will further monopolise the best education to serve the need of the market economy and control the society smoothly in future.

Hence, the CSS is going to safeguard and promote the powerful and influential minority who would acquire the knowledge and skill in hi-tech areas while the mass would get elementary education as a dole from national government or international

donors. Are we moving for quality improvement through the CSS for sidetracking the long cherished dream of making primary education a fundamental right? How far the CSS will be possible, practicable and propitious to the general mass poses a great question?

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

A C. MALLICK

India though united spiritually and emotionally to a great extent yet it is true that the country is a complex matrix of antagonistic groups of caste, class and religion. Also there is disparity between rich and poor, urban and rural, educated elites and common man and even men and women.

India adopted socialistic mode of Govt with emphasis on public sector and now switched to partial free economy, but the experiment will hardly bring any radical change in building a more cohesive society

Education is perhaps the only path which should act as a major channel for individual mobility and bringing in the desired social change but the practice has been encashed by the select group in further consolidating their position thus bringing more disparity and thereby defeating the very purpose of bringing social cohesion through education. There is a great need to revolutionise the schooling pattern to usher in desired change to narrow the yawning gaps among different sections. Following points are suggested.

All children have to study in the primary schools upto at least class 'V' (in the local primary school only Neighbourhood school)

- ⇒ If it is possible, all children of the locality may pursue their secondary level studies in their neighbourhood schools only
- ⇒ In no case ordinarily child from a locality is encouraged to pursue his studies in a school outside his locality

This will encourage meaningful interaction among students of a locality. The very students who meet at school and interact with each other will also play and interact with each other outside the school forum. This will bring about a close relationship among students and their families. At present this is not in practice in cities

- ⇒ to promote one type of schooling throughout the country
- ⇒ to promote education through mother tongue only, at least upto the age of 10 years in all the schools

- ⇒ If books/teachers of a widely spoken language not recognised by Govt. is faced, necessary initiative is to be taken to prepare standard books in line with books prepared for recognised languages (Ex. teaching 'Santhali' tribal students).
- ⇒ English, Hindi are to be introduced after class V.
- ⇒ The primary school should be generally within one kilometer reach of all students.
- ⇒ The teachers of the schools should be generally from the nearby locality. If more no of teachers are there in a school, there should be an adequate mix of local as well outsiders
- ⇒ Mostly the primary level teachers should be females.
- ⇒ to adopt uniform dress for all children
- ⇒ to promote at least one set of khadi dress as uniform.
- ⇒ to inculcate the value of labour
- ⇒ the children should be encouraged to clean the premises, plant tree, do at least ten to fifteen minutes of manual labour daily in the school. This will be done in such a way as to develop respect for manual labour
- ⇒ the children should get acquainted to preliminaries and rudiments of different vocations, life ways of the locality. The importance of work, the dignity of labour should be conveyed to the children.
- ⇒ Also a lot has to be thought over timing of the school, vocation duration and timing of vocation, involvement of parents of children, interaction of successful personalities of locality etc.

A common school system will not merely thought as a school but as a part of life of a child through which a nation with people not obsessed with 'upper' or 'us' and 'they' will be dreamt of

IS THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM FEASIBLE?

Atma Ram

The Common School mode suggested by the Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) and later commended by the Education Policy (1968), National Policy on Education (1986, 1992), and the Acharya Ramamurti Review Committee (1990) has not been accepted, in general, by "users" of the system. In stead of adopting the mode, the education pattern has moved away from it. It is pertinent to examine the present scenario in education and the feasibility of the long-standing recommendation

We have practically two type of education institutes in the country Government and the Private. Although there has been an increasing tendency to open more and more government institutes in the post-independence era, the country has at the moment more of private education institutes than the government ones, imparting, by and large, better education. Many of them have earned name and fame over the years, and students from different regions join them.

Ideally speaking, the concept of the common school is laudable. As the Kothari Education Commission, which originally gave the idea, points out, the system has five distinctive features . access for all irrespective of social, economic and other differences, access to education will depend on talent; adequate standards will be maintained; no tuition fee would be charged; and the average parent would not ordinarily feel the need to send his wards to expensive schools outside the system

Now, a system is meant for the people, and is always known by its practicability and results. In practice, the system of common school has not taken roots—it is not acceptable to the majority of parents. It is also to be noted that the National Policy on Education (1986, 92) suggested it, but its Programme of Action (POA) does not spell out any modalities. And those who goes outside the system are rich individuals, who also rule the roots

The Acharya Ramamurti Review Committee Report enumerates six plausible reasons for its failure social and economic disparities, the constitutional protection

given to the minorities to establish institutions; the poor quality of education Government Schools; lack of political will, increase in public schools, and existence and growth of institution is increasing in the public sector like sainik schools, and Kendriya Vidyalays meant for special categories of students.

Indeed, the issue is not so simple as some think of it. We should devise a system which could operate well in our country, keeping in view stark realities of life in various regions. To plead on the ground that it is followed in the USSR, the USA and elsewhere, is neither here nor there. It is advisable to go in for realistic opinion and other block-level surveys, and then ascertain in what form, if at all, such a system can succeed in India.

Several factors stand in the way of the common school system. The "daily" interference of politician, lack of infrastructure and devoted faculty contribute to the awfully low standards in Government schools. Here education, especially primary education, is not a priority. Lack of regular inspections and public examination at the primary stage has further added to the deterioration in ordinary institutions. Now, there is much flow of wealth, the parents often wish to give the best or quality education to their children. They can afford it. Why should they be prevented from doing that in a free country?

The only way out is to revamp education in ordinary schools, especially in case of families which are living below the poverty line. They constitute about 40 percent of our population. Many parents go in for public schools which charge high fees and funds, and don't favour government institutions where education is free. To make for "equality" does not mean to bring other down to your level, a very low level.

In the field of literacy, the condition is shocking in the country. Even after half a century, almost half of the population is illiterate, school drop-out rates are woefully high. The 1968 Policy emphasized universalization of elementary education, equity of access, and quality of education. But such general formulations could not be translated into a comprehensive strategy for implementation. India, with a literacy rate of only 52 percent, harbours the largest illiterate population in the 15 plus age - group (291 million) in the world. About 35 per cent of the males and 62 per cent of the females are illiterate here whereas the global literacy figure is 77 per cent.

Then, "literacy" does not mean "education. In case of the ill-educated and uneducated, the condition is much more alarming. Allocations for primary education have dwindled much after the five year plan, for reasons best known to the planners and policy makers. One discovers that elementary education, especially in the rural belts where the real India lives, has been consistency ignored. As political considerations usually weighed heavily for expensive facilities and consolidation was not thoughtout, permanent increase in education institutions over the years did not make much difference. Figures present a very dismal situation. At the 5th All India Education Survey (NCERT, New Delhi, 1992) indicates . only 47.4 percent primary schools have drinking water facility, 15.5 percent uninals, 5.1 percent separate uninals for girls, 6.3 percent lavatones, 2.8 per cent separate lavatones for girls, 7.56 per cent no instructional rooms, 34.74 per cent one 'room, 23.95 per cent only two rooms; of the 26,58,220 primary sections, 38.5 have no blackboard. Most of the institutions with deficiency of all sorts are located in the rural regions. Under these circumstances to compel all children to remain in the neighbourhood schools will be both callous and in-human.

A large number of children in India continue to remain outside the school-fold. Our objective should be to ensure their access to schools and to make for their retention through quality education. This is not being done in several areas despite loud professions and high sounding slogans. In this, four are the worst hit states, and they constitute around 46 per cent population of the country - Bihar, Maharashtra, Assam and Uttar Pradesh. Somehow those who get benefit once, continue getting more and more, and the left-out are often left for ever. Interestingly, In a state, a district with maximum literacy rate was recommended for inclusion in the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), the scheme essentially meant for areas with the lowest literacy rates. As for standards in the formal education system, the less said the better.

The Review Committee (1990), therefore, pleads for larger allocations for education and exclusive emphasis on girls'education. To quote its recommendations : provisions be significantly increased for elementary (particularly primary) education; provision of special allocations for improvement of the school system in backward, semi-urban, tribal, hilly tracks; ensuring instruction for all in the medium of mother tongue at the primary level, phased implementation of the common school system within a 10-year time-frame, and exploring some ways of including the private school in the system.

The common school system is not practicable innovation. Also, there is no bar of caste, creed, community or sex to get admission in any educational institution. In Government schools education is free in all states. And we cannot normally or legally ask parents to send their children to the neighbourhood schools only. It amounts to asking a patient to consult only local doctors, a householder to buy things from the nearby shops only. It sounds an anachronism and contradiction in this age of globalization in every field, improved means of communication, and the need for national outlook.

We should rather have a first-hand status-picture of primary education in each state and region, and then make a collective endeavour to remove causes which stand in the way of universalisation endeavour to remove causes which stand in the way of universalisation of elementary education of a reasonable standard. In this, education of the poor –of any caste, creed, tribe, community, sex, region, etc.–should be the chief consideration. The Central as well as State Governments should urgently appoint roving education commissions for enquiring into Primary School Education.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR INDIA: PROPOSED UNITY IN DIVERSITY

BISWANATH ROY

1. Introduction

Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) had proposed the Common School System (CSS) of public education so that national development, social and national integration in particular could be effectively implemented. This was repeated in the 1968 policy. The inspiration was drawn from such systems as they are/were prevalent in Scandinavia, USSR, USA and UK

Shri JP Naik, the then member-secretary of the commission, had again advocated the idea in his book titled *"Elementary Education in India : a promise to keep"* (Allied Publishers, 1975, p.71-72) stating that, *"the education commission recommended the creation of a common school system of public education and the adoption of the neighbourhood schools concept at the elementary stage"* (p 71)

Next, the programme of action (1986) had stated that the CSS so far remained only as a distant goal (para 7, p III). The national policy on education (NPE), had also stated about the CSS for implementation but through a *National System of Education (NSE)*. In this respect the POA (1992) wanted to be *"more practical and action oriented"* (p XII) and in course of that went on to talk of the values for NSE. But no direct mentions were there about either common schools system or neighbourhood school. Universal adult literacy, UEE and EFA by 2000 A.D. took up central attention. On the other hand, CSS got diverted and dropped in favour of NSE. The concept of neighbourhood school did not take-off at all. There was no mention of CSS in the POA of 1992. As a result, the idea of CSS and neighbourhood schools got dissolved but came the idea of NSE and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNVs). The country as a whole had accepted the structural changes (10+2+3) suggested by the NSE but for the JNVs there was partial acceptance only. The reasons were mainly ideological. Whatever it may be, the purpose of CSS and neighbourhood schools got fragmented and changed.

2. Constitutional Provisions and Actions

It is a fact that the subject of education is placed in the concurrent (joint) list of the constitution. The centre and the states have their own autonomies to act accordingly to serve their own interests. For example, Kendrya Vidyalayas and JNVs work under the all India body CBSE. Whereas, there are more schools under all state level boards plus ICSE, Tibetan Schools Organization, WAKF board etc. Such heterogeneous groupings have given different school management system, curriculum and what not.

Some have however, thought that if education (like defence and finance) can be brought under *central list*, then may be all anomalies will be over. This will require constitution amendment which is an uphill task and there may not be any support for this.

As such, *decentralization* of education through panchayat raj institutions (PRIs), panchayat standing committee on education (PEC) and village education committees (VECs) remains as the other alternative. The main problem, however, remains over curriculum, syllabus, medium of instruction, serving local interests (language and culture), evaluation procedure, teachers role, school climate etc.

All these matters can be put as related to the political situation in the country vis-à-vis *centre-state relation in the field of education*. Moreover, it is also related to the skillful handling of the situation by the educationists. The crux of the problem lies here. A committee of the CABE had advocated in 1993 about the decentralization of education through panchayat raj institutions (PRIs) and municipal bodies in the light of the provisions made in the constitution (73rd and 74th amendment) acts. It was suggested that there should be sufficient delegation of powers to the state governments for extensive control over curricular, cocurricular, management of institutions (administrative and financial) etc. Also there was a suggestion for village education committees (VECs) and panchayat standing committee on education (PEC). If thought so, then there could be adequate panchayat raj legislation. The roles of SCERT, SIE, DIETs were also mentioned.

The centre and the states have also jointly agreed in favour of a national curriculum framework, NPE and POA (1992), UEE and EFA by 2000 A.D., no detention policy upto class V, acceptance of CCE and CCR, academic burden and MLL, value

education, preparation of syllabus, writing of text-books and supplementary reading materials by NCERT, CBT, NBT etc

3. Further Requirements

In spite of the above mentioned efforts, the principal educational objectives like national integration, removal of hatred and communal feelings, development of an egalitarian and integrated society did not get promoted sufficiently. It has happened so due to lack of sufficient around efforts to wholly propagate the resultant qualitative improvements in school education. School education is yet to become fully both attractive and useful for all concerned. It is a matter of management and communication gap. Further requirements in this regard have been stated below

- 3.1. Strengthening the role of the *Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)* by making its recommendations as mandatory on all concerned. It should be the apex body for policy, planning and execution of all educational matters. It should fix responsibilities and make them accountable before the parliament.
- 3.2. Pre-primary education is not fully recognized by all states in the country for entry into class I. This should be looked into to make it as necessary.
- 3.3. Regarding *primary education*, still there is no unanimity whether it should end at class IV or V. This has to be made uniform.
- 3.4. The *no-detention policy* upto class V should be made compulsory for all schools, may be private or any other.
- 3.5. *Teaching of Hindi* vis-à-vis Sanskrit and other important languages needs review. First target should be the Kvs and JNVs.
- 3.6. *Admission problems* should be strictly down to 1: 40 (teacher-pupil ratio) in a class. The problems created by literacy activities for class I (1:100 and more) need to be controlled.
- 3.7. *Upper age limit* for admission into class I has to be enforced, say upto 7 yrs. of age along with strict age verification.
- 3.8. *History and social studies books* should give emphasis (through CCE and CCR) on the values like:
 - i. love for the country
 - ii. dignity of labour
 - iii. creativity and morality
 - iv. secularism, democracy and socialism
 - v. equality of opportunity and discipline
 - vi. sportsmanship and tolerance
 - vii. removal of bias on sex, class, caste and religion

3.9 For the purpose of elimination of the religious, class and caste character of the schools and fostering of *national integration*, the following steps may be considered

- a) Schools should have *neutral type of names*. For example, Delhi School, Calcutta Boys, City School etc. and not having titles like Anglo-Arabic, Hindu, Parshi, Lala....., Acharya....., Sri....., Smt....., Maharaja/Maharani.. etc. These may remove personifications, cults, religious biasness, class-caste character of the schools. The titles Kendrya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc. serve as good examples
- b) All scholarships and awards should be given in the name of the government. No personal names (of the giver or the founder etc.) should be associated. *National, State Scholarships/Awards* as they are given now should serve as examples
- c) All *study materials* in history, social studies, literature should quote established authors only and not biased or personalized interpretations of single authors
- d) There should be national dress code (*school uniform*) for all schools.
- e) Excepting national songs/anthems, all schools should use local well known songs for the *morning prayer*

3.10. Framing of a *national level calendar* for school education to include the daily routine, holidays, class hours, total school hours, periods of studies, play, music, art and craft etc. This should be good for all schools throughout the country. Geographical conditions may be kept in mind for changes.

3.11 There should be *national syllabus* for all classes for classes for class I to XII for uniform academic standards.

3.12. There should be *national eligibility test* at the end of class X and XII through a national educational testing service/corporation

3.13. There should be strict rules for giving *affiliation to schools* by any board say CBSE, ICSE, state board etc. Vigilance should be increased by making regular inspections of the schools for a national standard

3.14. Nation-wide *school level telecast* should be started like country-wide classroom telecast programme of UGC.

4. Conclusion

It may be that all or some of the efforts (as mentioned earlier) are undertaken, the idea of common school system may get a platform for further exercise.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

MRS. C.K. NANAYA

INTRODUCTION

India has forged ahead and completed 50 years of Independence. We, as citizens of India have marched forward in the areas of Science, Technology, Medicine, Art etc. These advances in different areas have made the people of India more broadminded in all aspects - physical, social as well as mental. India is a pluralist society.

The pluralist society is referred to as "based on shared values and a variety of cultures and lifestyles", which can be maintained within the framework of its laws. Specifically this concept and component helps pupils to appreciate that all citizens can and must be equal. It increases awareness of and works towards resolving some of the tensions and conflicts that occur between groups that perceive each other to be socially, racially, ethnically, or culturally different. In this context it explores diversity, fairness and justice, co-operation and competition, prejudice and discrimination.

Promoting any one lifestyle to young people is not good practice. Children need to develop an understanding of the diversity of lifestyles. Teachers have a responsibility to clarify their own values and attitudes so that they do not promote them inappropriately or unconsciously. Education should be implemented within the framework of equal opportunity and an ethos of honesty, trust and respect, so that pupils can put forward and explore their ideas. Education must be seen as positive and life enriching. For this, values can be taught. However, values are also learnt through experience and examples. Children can be equipped with the skills needed to allow them to develop their own values.

Is our education system today fulfilling the above needs? Education should bring us towards a common goal. The solution - "A Common School System".

CONCEPT OF "A COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM"

A common school system may be defined as "a similar system of education imparted to all the children, in every part of the country, irrespective of class, caste or creed in all schools". This definition implies that it is - One system of education,

- irrespective of class, caste or creed,
- in all schools in the country.

A common system of education to all the children in India will result in young people having similar type of education at the school level. It is regrettable that even after 50 years of independence with free primary education for all, we have not been able to implement a common school system. This has led to evils such as social segregation and class distinctions. The question raised here is in spite of all these innovative measures in the field of education, are we doing anything to eliminate these evils?

The Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended a common school system in the field of education. The 1986 National Policy on Education stated, "Effective measures will be taken in the direction of the Common School System recommended in the 1968 Policy." In spite of these recommendations, we have not implemented a common school system, even today.

A common school system will bring different social classes and groups together and promote an integrated society. It will promote positive outlook in the minds of the youth. What is happening today is that the young in different parts of the country have different quality education, which has resulted in competition for professional courses and jobs, thus giving rise to frustrations and restlessness amongst the youth. To eliminate these evils in the society, a common school system is the most appropriate. Once knowledge of the same kind is given to all, no one can claim that one is better than the other. We will have children with similar aims and similar expectations.

PRESENT SITUATION OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

Education in India today clearly shows a lot of variations. Relatively speaking, the system of education in public schools, central schools, govt. aided schools and municipal schools impart different types of education to children. Curriculum, methods, books, approaches, policies are all different in these schools. This leads to segregation of children of different states. Admission policies differ in different states. Bringing a common system of education will promote our youth of tomorrow to think in a united way. Today's system of education is moving away from a common goal, thus posing a serious threat to the goals and objectives of nationally approved educational policies and programmes.

STEPS AND MEASURES FOR ESTABLISHING A COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

The 'why', 'what', and 'How' of the common school system Why do we need "A Common School System"?

In spite of all the advances in the field of education, what one sees today is social, emotional and physical demarcation and discrimination in the society. Where has education failed us? During the pre-independence period, there were a lot of lacunae in the system of education. During the post-independence education reached all sections of the society, reaching even the remote areas. Even then, why is the unrest amongst people from the various strata of the society? This is because of the different systems of education in different parts of the country. In this process, some impart excellent quality education and some poor quality."

What is the alternative?

A common school system for all. A common system cannot be introduced at higher level of education. This has to be introduced at the very beginning of one's educational ladder.

Education as preparation : Schooling in the early years is preparation for some later period of life, hence the first task of education is to prepare a child for his maturity, his life of reason, by guiding toward that maturity". To teach 3 R's adequately to give the child the rudimentary skills so that he can in later years act rationally. Most important of all is Value education. Today's society has lost this aspect of education. If this is started at the very early stage for all children in every school, the children will learn to live by these values.

What is the 'right' content? Most important on the elementary level is "reading, writing and figuring" with some consideration for history, geography, literature and science, equally important is character training and value clarification are also applicable to secondary education. A common curriculum for all students, all over the country is the need of the hour.

How do we bring about the change?

It is not an easy task but implementing a common school system from the very beginning will bring out in our children the same core education and value education common to all children. A child from the Northern State can discuss any subject with another child from the Southern, Eastern or Western states without any communication gap. That will be the beauty of a common school system Education for all and of the same type - A true democratic thought!

PLANNING A STRATEGY: The process in developing a framework for a common school system is given below

- Step 1 . Review existing policy and practice
- Step 2 : Identify what the children need and want
- Step 3 . Identify what the staff and the community need and want.
- Step 4 Establish a co-ordinating group.

Towards A Common School System

DR J.C. GOYAL

The Common School System is an essential step towards the development of a National System of Education as envisaged by the Kothari Commission (1964-66). The Commission not only put forward a uniform structure of education in the country but also recommended a comparable quality of education to all children without distinction of caste, creed, religion, language, region and social and economic conditions. It specifically says "A common school system of public education should be evolved in place of the present system which divides the management of schools between a large number of agencies whose functioning is inadequately coordinated (p 249)"

In pursuance of this recommendation, The National Policy on Education 1968 and 1986 reiterated the desirability of such a system. In order to realise this goal, the Programme of Action on the National Policy on Education-1986 states that "In view of the role of education in removal of disparities, special measures will be taken to ensure that whatever the socio-economic background of the children, they get opportunity to achieve success of a level which approximates to the level of children from comparatively better-off sections of the society, and the country moves apace in the direction of the Common School System as spelt out in the 1968 policy" (p 11)

The Government of India has been taking several measures for making school education accessible to all children by opening more and more schools or non-formal education centres within a radius of one Km. And a middle school within a radius of three Kms. The following Table gives the growth of recognised schools in the country since 1951.

Table I
Growth of Recognized Schools since 1950-51

Year	Primary	Upper Primary	High/Hr Sec /Inter
1950-51	209671	13596	7416
1960-61	330399	49663	17329
1970-71	408378	90621	37051
1980-81	494503	118355	51624
1990-91	560935	151456	79796
1995-96	590421	171216	98134

Source: MHRD. Annual Report, 1996-97, Part-I, New Delhi.

The figures in the Table I indicate that the number of primary schools in the country has increased about three times in 1995-96 from that in 1950-51. Similarly the number of upper primary schools has gone up to about 12 times in 1995-96 and of high/higher secondary schools to about 13 times of that in 1950-51. It clearly indicates that a spectacular achievement has been made in the school education. Let us now examine

the progress made in terms of enrolment of students at different levels Table II below shows the gross enrolment ratios during 1995-96

Table II
Gross Enrolment Ratio in Schools, 1995-96

Enrolment Ratios			
Category			
General	Boys	Girls	Total
Classes I -V	114.5	93.3	104.3
Classes VI-VIII	79.5	54.9	67.6
S.C. Students			
Classes I-V	127.56	95.12	111.91
Classes VI-VIII	74.88	46.77	61.33
S.T. Students			
Classes I-VI	129.96	94.87	113.03
Classes VI-VIII	61.59	37.63	50.04

Source: Op.cit.

The gross enrolment ratio at the primary stage indicates that all children in the age group 6-11 years have been enrolled in schools, though 93.3 percent girls only. However, the age-specific ratios are much less than that. But it is note-worthy that the enrolment ratios of SC and ST students at the primary stage are higher than that for all students in general. Moreover the dropout rate at the Primary Stage in 1995-96 (provisional) was 39.37. If we look at the enrolment ratios at the upper primary stage, these vary from about 50 to 67 for various categories, namely, general, SC and ST students. The dropout rate being about 58 at the elementary level, the achievement of attaining the goal of universal elementary education appears to be remote. It is therefore, obvious that we have not been able to make education accessible to all children in spite of a number of measures taken by the Government. The latest proposal of the Govt of India making elementary education a fundamental right and making it compulsory for all children in the age-group of 6-11 years may help to some extent.

Quality of Education

The quality of education at the school stage presents a very dismal picture. The achievement studies conducted in some states under the DPEP programme clearly pointed out that a student of class V did not have even the standard of class II and III in mathematics and the language. The reasons for this state of affairs may be many. One obvious reason was opening of a large number of schools during post independence period without proper infrastructural facilities, both human and physical. It has naturally resulted in poor quality of education. Realizing the need for quality improvement in schools as pointed out in the Programme of Action-1986 (modified in 1992), the Govt of India took several steps to improve the standard of education of schools. These programmes included the Operation Blackboard, improvement of teacher education, improvement of Science teaching, environmental studies, use of education technology, stipends to SC/ST students, promoting girls education, education of handicapped children, some

internationally funded projects like DPEP, Lok Jumbish, Bihar Education Project, and projects in Andhra Pradesh and U.P. All these efforts have, however, do not seem to have made any appreciable improvement in the quality of education. To speak of providing education of a comparable standard to all children without any discrimination cannot be dreamt of under the present conditions. It is so because as I feel, that the Government itself has been creating more disparities by opening various types of schools with different kind of facilities and resources. Examples of this are the schools under Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, National Open School, Sainik Schools and increasing number of schools affiliated to the Central Board School Education etc.

Instead of bringing all schools at par in respect of quality of education without charging any fee, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction. The Rammurti Committee (1990) has identified the following reasons responsible as to why the Common School System has not reached anywhere. These are economic and social disparities, lack of political will, proliferation of public schools with English medium of instruction, Constitutional protection to minorities for opening and administering their schools and establishment of different types of schools by the Government for separate categories of students. The Committee has noted that the first step in securing equity and social justice in education is the building up of a Common School System (p 92).

Similarly, the idea of neighbourhood schools has not been implemented seriously. Delhi Administration has laid down some rules for making admission of students from neighbouring schools only, but these rules are observed more in their breach rather than their observance in spirit. A recent case of its gross breach has been seen in the death of 30 innocent students of Shaheed Ameerchand Sarvodaya School No 2, Ludlo Castle, New Delhi, on November 18, 1997. The school which should have admitted students from its neighbouring areas only it actually had a large number of students from the trans Yamuna areas. It is happening all over Delhi.

Suggestions

In order to make the Common School System a reality, the following steps may be taken, although some of them may appear to be harsh and difficult:

1. Education should be given top priority in the matter of allocation of funds which is only about 3.5 percent of GNP now and has only been committed to be raised to 6 percent during the Ninth five year plan.
2. Special provisions should be made for allocation of funds for education in socially and economically weaker areas.
3. The scheme of neighbourhood schools should be implemented strictly. In fact, it is a small number of members of the upper class society and some bureaucrats who do not want to send their wards to such schools and hence are not serious in its implementation and they are decision makers also.
4. Schooling facilities should be provided in each habitation however small it may be, to make education accessible to all.
5. The three language formula should be implemented or at least the medium of instruction should not be other than the mother tongue or the regional language.
6. The private/public schools should be brought in the Common school System by taking some measures. The first thing which could be done is to ask them not to use English.

as the medium of instruction. These schools should also be asked not to charge exorbitant fees. The Delhi Administration has taken a right step by initiating action in this direction. These schools should admit students only from special areas, say within five Kms or Sq

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COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM IN INDIA - WHY & HOW

JITENDRA SHARMA

To deliberate and discuss the establishment of the Common School System in India in this fiftieth year of our Independence is a late start. However, better late than never. Though the Education Commission (1964-66) and the National Policies on Education (1968 and 1986) had also reiterated their faith in the Common School System yet nothing much could be done in this regard.

It is not that we don't have a Common School System in our Country. We certainly have this system in the form of the Government Schools but side by side there are other types of Schools too, i.e. the non-govt. schools in the form of aided and non-aided schools.

This scenario of the schools at once provides us with a very simple measure that can be taken for establishing the Common School System - dispense with all types of schools except the Government Schools and we are left with the desired Common School System. The government by legislation can make provisions that it itself will establish and run all schools.

This is a step that requires utmost courage and to some it may appear rather an extremist one.

A beginning has to be made somewhere as the educational base in a democratic society should be broad and generous and hence the notion that most people should have only a little education and that the few should have a great deal of education should largely be rejected.

Private schools should be given wide latitude to experiment and to develop distinctive programmes of education so long as the minimum requirements set by the state are met with regard to the common values of citizenship, social unity, and public health and safety.

If the diversity has to be considered as a value to be prized in a free and open society, then the decision to permit and encourage variety as a means of improving education has to carry with it the general requirement that public funds shall not be used for the direct support or aid of private schools.

The diversion of public funds to private schools tends to weaken the common schools and promote divisiveness in the culture along class or religious lines.

We have diverted public funds so generously to the private schools that they have thereby seriously weakened the development of a genuinely common school system.

It is strongly felt that equality and equality of opportunity strongly undergirds Indian republicanism and the opportunity should be kept open if the Republic is to endure

The heart of the concept of the Common School System can best be expressed in this way : the school will have to take on certain important tasks which could no longer be left to chance education by family and therefore schooling will have to be made available to all future citizens. The Common School is to be a *'common'* school, not a school for the common people, but common in a new sense of common to all the people

The words of *Bishop George W. Doane* which he said to the legislature of *New Jersey* are worth quoting here . *"The Common School is 'common', not as inferior, not as a school for poor man's children, but as the light and air are common"*.

The Common School is to be for rich and poor alike. Not only it is to be free, but of high quality - the equivalent of any institution which can be privately established. Clearly, if it is not, it will soon be tainted with the stigma of *"pauperism"* and renounced by the proud and independent citizenry of a free republic.

It is assumed that association of children will inevitably engender mutual respect and friendship, and the common school will not only be *'open'* to all but *'used'* by all. The children of all religions, creeds and economic levels will then have an opportunity to mix together in the same school-room. It is hoped that after such warm association in childhood, different groups in the community will forever have common memories, faiths and respect on which to build amicable working relationships.

In effect, what we have to do is to transform the idea of schooling as a private luxury for *'some'* children into one of schooling as a public necessity for *'all'* children.

The private school can play, numerically, only an insignificant part in the major project of preparing the people for sound citizenship. The private school cannot do *'anything'* for *'everybody'*. It can do nothing useful for *'anybody'* because it wraps itself in solitary pride, regarding itself as apart from, rather than a part of , the process of establishing an egalitarian society in our country.

Despite the superior facilities which private schools can provide in their context, they are widely held, by most people connected with public education, to be insignificant if not contemptible, by the general public, class conscious and snobbish;

and, by all but their patrons and propnetors, undemocratic by definition. Private schools limit their attention to only a small fraction of the school population. The money spent on them can better be directed toward the improvement and expansion of public education *An educational institution whose facilities are not placed at the disposal of everyone who wants them is discriminatory and subject to condemnation.*

Moreover, to a regrettable extent the private schools cannot be run on a quality basis; they are being run on a price basis. They cannot confine their student groups to the best boys and girls in point of desire and fitness for the kind of education they want to offer. They are obliged, in varying degree, to take the best boys and girls there are who can pay the price.

The teaching of English too has many implications. Why are English medium schools flounshing? In Government Schools English is not taught at the Primary level. Consequently the parents turn to the Private English-medium schools. Why should not English be taught in the Common Schools from class I?

This is a pertinent question to be pondered about and answered satisfactorily.

It can fairly be concluded that the Common School System is the need of the hour today and the following measures in the direction of the establishment of such a system could be well deliberated:

- 1) *Providing all those facilities in the Common Schools which are presently available in the aided and unaided schools.*
- 2) *Taking over by the government all existing aided and unaided schools by compensating their management's suitably.*
- 3) *Making it mandatory for all State government employees to admit their wards to the Common Schools.*
- 4) *Making regional languages the medium of instruction and teaching of English compulsory during the entire schooling years.*
- 5) *No school, other than the Central Schools, should be allowed to be affiliated to the C.B.S.E. They should all be affiliated to their State Boards.*
- 6) *Certain reservations should be provided to the students of the Common Schools in the government jobs who otherwise do not fall in any reservation category.*
- 7) *The teachers teaching in the Govt. Schools should not be assigned duties other than those pertaining to the academic field.*

If the Common School System is established in India in its true spirit, it will be what once G.B. Shaw desired: *"Eton, Harrow, Winchester and their cheaper and more pernicious imitators should be razed to the ground and their foundations sown with salt".*

PAPER ON COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

K. DURGA PRASANNA

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the essentials of democracy. An efficient and sound system of educational administration is infact the basis of a good democracy. It is a yard stick by which a Nation's development and prosperity can be measured. Hence a properly organised system of Education is a must. Common School System is one such system which can help in the realization of our goals. In the following pages, salient features of Common School System are presented, inherent defects in the system are discussed and suitable modifications have been suggested for its implementation.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Indian Education Commission gave a new concept of Public education - the concept of Common School System, the philosophy behind this concept is that such a system would provide equal access to all children irrespective of their caste, creed or community and socio-economic status. All schools will cater to the needs of haves and havenots alike and do away with the undersirable discrimination between school children coming from different Socio-economic backgrounds.

The Commission further stressed that the system will include all schools under different management's i.e Government, Local Bodies and Private Organisation in all parts of the country and this allows for an adequate co-ordination which is necessary for the smooth functioning of the Common School System. The Commission expressed a desire that such a system should be maintained at an adequate level of quality and efficiency. So that no parent would ordinarily feel any need to send his child to the institutions outside the system.

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

1. **INTERSTATE DISPARITIES:** Eminent educationists and public men are feeling that education should be transferred from the state list to that of centre so that Union government is given more responsibility and authority for shaping National policies. They feel that individualistic policies and plans followed in different states have put the national system of education in a condition of virtual chaos. A uniform pattern of education and uniform pay scales and other conditions of service would be possible only when there is parliament's control on the entire field of education.

2. **DISPARITIES IN SCHOOLS RUN BY LOCAL AND PRIVATE MANAGEMENT:**

The private schools are serving 69% secondary school going population at High school stage and the number of private schools has been expanding during the last two decades to deal with increasing number of school children. These figures are emphasised here just to show how valuable a force in private enterprise and how inevitable it is for us to take them into confidence before implementing any system of education. To decrease the disparities, a discriminating policy has to be adopted in respect of assistance to and control of private aided institutions. The better schools should be given more freedom and assistance so as to enable them to develop into the nucleus of the Common School System.

3. **DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN SCHOOL TEACHERS WORKING UNDER DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT:** Discrimination can be reduced by providing uniform pay scales and other service conditions by adopting the same method of recruitment in the institution of various categories. Principle of equalisation can be adopted by giving higher grants to poorer local bodies and private management's and lower grants to richer ones.

4. There are different syllabi which are now being used in India such as CBSE, ICSE etc. Each has their own set standards and levels. Education council of India should set standards to each of the class and an effort has to be made to see that each of the syllabi reach the prescribed standards.

Above given are some of the problems and suitable remedies have been suggested to reduce them.

Given below are the reasons which make the implementation of Common School System nearly impossible

- 1 *So long as economic inequalities continue to exist, social inequalities are inevitable and there is an indirect resistance from the privileged classes for the implementation of common school system*
- 2 *Implementation of common school system requires adequate finances*
- 3 *Private institutions always want to have a say in its implementation and they like to have their own ideas and pattern*
- 4 *The constitution seeks to protect the cultural and linguistic rights of minorities and there might be resistance from them to send their children to such schools.*

In view of the above facts, Common School System is too ideal and impractical to be implemented. We are not going to stray from it just because it is very difficult to be implemented. The idea here is to view the Common School System as an ideal case which can only be approximated in practice. We are going to frame programmes and policies looking at Common School System but always remembering the fact that it can only be approximated in practice. We are going to judge our progress regarding our policies and programmes by comparing it with the ideal case (Common School System). In other words, we are using the Common School System to estimate the efficacy of our programmes and policies.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM - A CHALLENGE TO PREAMBLE

Dr.K M.Gupta

An affluent person would like to send his/her children for education to a foreign country of his/her choice including U.K. or U.S.A. But our culture does not permit to send young ones away from home. The mother, the center of the family, can not think of sending the children away to a distant place. Then why not to create a "Foreign School" in the town itself. That is how Public School or Paid Schools were created in our country - India for education of the children belonging to affluent families or the families of ruling class who could afford to pay. For the education of masses General School or Government School or Government Aided Schools were established. After independence two types of schools became permanent features of our educational system.

DUALITY

2 In cities where children attend public schools, the family structure is unique-father, mother and two or three children. While children attending government schools come from large size families in general. The home culture of two children, attending public school and government school are different. The disparity in culture has gone to schools. Can we not provide same culture to the children in our schools? The public school culture, what R.P. Singh has stated in his 'Teaching Strife', has "developed education as a weapon of destruction and glorified their prejudices and justified hatred". The unfortunate component is that government schools also try to imbibe this culture.

3 The structure of population in the country is moving towards a direction where division can be made on the basis of caste, religion or sex. Because of political compulsions, the policy of family welfare is not going to be successful, the only hope in this social structure is education. Education can make people conscious about family welfare measures and small family norms. But the educational system of the country is also promoting division in the society. The rich families are becoming richer and small and poor families are becoming poorer and larger.

4 The gap between rich and poor continues to increase as the gap becomes wider, a large number of percentage of school-going children will fall below the poverty line. The poverty will influence the capacity of families to send their children

to school. Instances are available that after the failure of the first child other children are not sent to the school. The school for the poor has contributed to keep the whole family illiterate.

VALUE CRISES

5 Managing a classroom in public school is totally different from managing a classroom in government school or facility deprived school. So the teaching is. The children in public schools are conscious of the fact that they are there because of status of the father or family. The teachers are paid salary out of the fees paid by them. If these children are deprived from the facility for which they have paid, the children lodge protest. The parents also make a hue and cry for providing the facility. The situation may be compared to a hotel where one pays for every comfort one enjoys. Thus instead of developing a relationship of teacher and taught, one finds a relationship of master and servant. The children who cannot pay respect to teachers can never pay respect to parents. This has already created a value crisis in the society.

SCARCITY OF RESOURCES

6 In our materialistic set up who cares for, whether or not, teachers and students treat one another with respect, whether or not, they have productive time together, whether or not, they come to care for one another as person, whether or not, they are following norms of the society, whether or not, they read together, whether or not they achieve the objectives of education. The certainty remains that they are there, they will be again together. In public schools children are there because parents so desire. In Government schools, they are there because teachers want them there, Government wants them there. That is why in public school attendance is almost cent per cent. In Government schools the attendance is a matter of guess. The compulsion of togetherness requires a careful consideration for the job requirement of a teacher. Since both exist in the school they require minimum facility of not only of drinking water, building but also instructional material. While one can not find a public school without these facilities, the government school with these facilities is an exception.

7 The ability to be with the children cheerfully and respectfully requires certain minimum pre-requisite - learning and physical facilities. In order to provide minimum facilities in the state owned schools the state launched a scheme of Operation Black

Board (OB) implementing the National Policy on Education 1986. A thorough financial and social audit of implementation of the scheme may lead to startling scam in education.

8. A crowded classroom in public school may be there if it is a teaching shop. In a public school not only parents are expected to pay heavy donations and fees, they are also expected to have children with good marks which they call higher achievement or standards. While in government schools children are expected to be there only. The classrooms may be crowded if these are not crowded then these are deemed crowded for want of space and sitting arrangement. Library, laboratory, playing material, teaching equipment and blackboard are other considerations for making a school desirable. Even chalks are available with difficulty in many government schools. May I dare to ask a question to the Director of Education of all the states and union territories? Can they work in the office without a pen, chair or car? Then why teachers are forced to work in the schools which are not properly equipped.

CRISES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

9. While the existence of a public school without necessary physical and human resources will be a wonder in our country, the name of a government school is stated with pride if it has minimum facilities. A small number of public schools command the maximum resources. The resources of government schools are available in files in the office of Education Department which are in the possession of clerks. So there is always a mismatch between resources desired and resources available. A Director of Education will never feel concerned about the lack of physical and human resources in a school because his/her son or daughter is getting all the facilities in a school. Who can dare to comment about the children of Ministers or the Secretary of Education? Is there any one who can question their accountability?

10. The negative factors working in government schools system create occupationally burnt out teachers who can not meet the demands of the children and parents. This has resulted in a change in attitude and behaviour in response to demanding pressures, frustrations and unrewarding work experiences.

MODUS OPERANDI

11. No welfare state, except India, can afford to provide and promote differentiated education for elite and masses, haves and have-nots, rich and poor, ruler and ruled.

It is a conspiracy of the affluent against the poor masses to keep them illiterate and deprived for long. If they will be literate they will demand their rights and share in power, energy and resources. Further, Instead of creating demand for education a sinister movement has been generated to link education with white collar job. A son of a farmer or artisan after passing high school dreams for a job of clerk or even peon. The government system has made a peon, clerk or inspector so powerful in comparison to self-employed person, farmer or artisan that very structure of Indian society is defamed and deformed in the present set up. The government schools are working as factories to produce workers while public schools are producing achievers or masters. Exceptions may be there in each system.

12. The children in public schools spend on transport an amount equal to entire months expenditure on maintenance of a family of a child of government primary school. The inequality of the family structure is contributing to the future of a child studying in a school created by the system. The condition of a classroom of government primary school is pathetic. A look at children reveals about the family status. There exists a wide gap between the family of a child studying in a government school and family of a child attending a public school. This gap of two children is reflected in the resources available to government school and public school also. While the Preamble of the Constitution advocates for socialistic, secular and democratic society, education system is used to negate and destroy the Preamble and heighten gap between rich and poor.

TEACHING - A SECONDARY TASK

13. A teacher's job is to maintain an interpersonal relation with student. The teacher is expected to save deteriorating interpersonal climate in the school. But the poor infrastructure does not help teacher in his job. The government is silent spectator of the demise of whole system : instead of helping. On the contrary government school teachers are withdrawn from the classroom to work for such non-teaching work like-cattle counting, family welfare services and various surveys. The state utilizes their services because teachers cannot protest. They have orders from the state. The state can not order its clerks but it can order the school teachers. Public school teachers are spared because they are teachers of those children whose parents govern.

14. The public school teachers have one job only - take classes and teach students. How can the state utilize the services of persons who are meant to serve

the children of influential class including bureaucrats and politicians. Where is equality and where is justice for government school teachers?

EXPLOITATION

15 In our dreams we thought our nation will be free from exploitation. In a large number of public schools teachers are exploited in different ways. They are not paid the approved scales and salary. The management has designed several under hand practices for economic, physical, social and emotional exploitation of teachers. In Delhi itself, in any street one may find a school - English medium, Nursery, Public, Progressive, etc not paying even minimum wages to the teachers. Is there any one in existence to enforce the rule of law? These schools try to copy some of the practices of so called public schools. The parents are forced to pay exorbitantly for books, socks, belt, etc. Heavy amount is charged as tuition fee. The parents have no option because they can not send their children to either government schools which are substandard or to prestigious public schools which are out of their reach.

MULTIPLE SCHOOLS

16 At the time of independence, structure of education was different in different states. After the National Policy on Education 1986, the nation accepted uniform structure of education at school level. Now the country follows national curriculum for its children in order to maintain quality and comparability Inter-state and intra-state. The critical position is that we have different types of schools - Public Schools, Government Schools or Government Aided School not Common Schools. In the category of government schools we have different types of schools - Municipal Corporation Schools, Model Schools, Kendrya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya, Sainik Schools, etc. These schools differ with each other not only in resources but also in feeding groups or clientele they serve. Thereby each school becomes unique in implementing a curriculum which may be dangerous for the unity of the country in long run.

17. In this soil, Gandhiji started Basic Education for the masses. Education was designed on the Principle of self-reliance and self sustenance of individual, as well as village. Basic Education failed because our bureaucrats and politicians together wanted it to fail. Their interest was in danger because all the children - rich or poor -

would have got the same education in the same school and common school system would have flourished

RESOURCE GENERATION

18 Lot of money has been put in the system to make our country literate. From Planning Commission to Union Ministries and to States, all have channelised their resources to promote literacy in our country. The result is surprising and still we have largest number of illiterates in the country. We can save this money and direct it to government schools to flourish and work at par with public schools. We should have one type of schools only - common school. Alternately in order to make our people literate we amend the Representation of the Peoples Act. The only amendment it requires is removing the Election Symbol from the ballot paper. The Election Commission will also save lot of money being spent on the printing of ballot papers. It will be responsibility of each and every candidate or society or the political parties to make masses literate. At best the voters will be able to read the name of candidate in whose favour they casted their vote. The objectives of making people literate may be achieved through this process. Many more ways may be identified to generate resources for the school education. Of course, no begging or borrowing for the elementary education from foreign countries is required.

THE HOPE

19 If we will have common school system the advantages of public school system will flow to students while the advantages of government school system will flow to society and teachers. Do we need a revolution to have a common school system? A Gandhi is required for the Nation to help masses for education.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

KETAKI DATTA

The concept "*Common School*" had been rooted in the 1968 Resolution on National Policy on Education. The immediate emphasis was on "*social cohesion*" and "*national integration*". In 1986 National policy on Education, promises were made that effective measures would be adopted to implement and expand the idea of Common school system. My sincere efforts in this essay is to examine whether the idea has received any facelift or still it remains a pipedream.

India is a vast country where various states, societies ramifying into classes, parties and class prevail. But, as India itself is a unity in diversity, the diverging customs and attitudes need to be garnered on a common pedestal.

An overhauling of the school system seems to be a wise and pertinent solution. The present set-up of school education creates a hiatus between one sector of society and the other, and, the gap threatens to widen day by day. As a remedial step, the Government plans to start free primary schools in different parts of India. But the efforts hang halfway, on loose ends. Consequentially, private schools mushroom in pen and corner of the country. But, as the private schools do not provide free tuition, the children from middle-class and well-off families only can have access to these schools. The poor and the rich again stand at loggerheads, the education issue being the main divider.

The Common School System gains ground as a panacea to the problems that pester the country always, which are social disparity, national disintegration, class-consciousness, separatist penchant so on and so forth. The Common School System considers two things mainly - social equality and economic equality. The basic objectives of Common School System are:-

1. The education is open to all irrespective of class, colours, creed, socio-economic status
2. The education should be imparted to all and emphasis should be laid on the talents of the students
3. The education should be imparted, free of cost.
4. The education stresses '*standard*' and '*values*'

- 5 The academic staff should satisfy the aspiration of the guardians of the students to such an extent that they will give up the thought of admitting their wards to different schools having higher standard
- 6 The Common School must contain the provision for all the levels of school-education, starting from the primary level to the secondary level of education
- 7 The common School System must be introduced in all parts of India

The existing school system needs a reconsideration. Population, private schools with exorbitant tuition fees, discrimination between rich and poor students according to monetary standard than individual talents-these factors cannot be pooh-poohed altogether. Again, these mal-factors cannot be abolished by a magic wand within a day or two.

The number of primary schools (of course, they do not conform fully to the ideals and outlines of Common School System) in Independent India has reached 581000 by 1994 - '95 (according to a report supplied by K B Sahay, The Statesman, October 22, 1997). His reference was different, it related to increase in population. Secondary schools have increased in equal proportion. Again, the feedback is not at all satisfactory. If we again veer our attention to another angle, we notice that several schools gather support from religion. To be precise, the majority of the Muslims prefer to send their children to Madrasa schools, the Sikhs stick their choice to Khalsa schools, the Christians are for getting their children educated through English-medium schools, the Hindus are seen to opt for the schools which have their respective mother-tongue as the first language. All these divergent thinking can be brought to a healthy consensus-Common School System. How? The measures are being mentioned below -

- 1) The private schools must not be given the sanctions and facilities which the Common Schools will enjoy
- 2) The students of the Common School with good result must be given Scholarships in universities or at least they must enjoy special facilities regarding Tuition fees, accommodation etc.
- 3) The deserving candidate with Common School background must enjoy the privilege of being recruited by different employing bodies, like, Staff Selection Commission, College Service Commission, Public Service Commission etc.
- 4) The selection of teaching staff must be based on certain strict principles, such as, rigorous interview based on the academic performance and marks obtained by the candidate, performance in co-curricular activities, the candidate's participation in social activities etc.

- i) *The facilities and amenities enjoyed by the teachers, once inducted into the Common School System must be the same.*
 - ii) *The teachers who have attained the same academic achievements, and who perform similar duties in different Common Schools must be entitled to same emoluments*
- 5) A well-thoughtout plan must be adhered to, while imparting education. The teaching must be of good, beneficial and equal standard in all Common Schools. But how can this be achieved? Each and every Common School must take the local facilities, inconveniences, and problems into account. Thereafter, the school should try to uplift the standard of education in keeping with the social standard and educational level of the region, to be precise of the locality. For that reason, the teachers assisted by the principal, the students, the parents and guardians of the students, the education department and the local authority must chalk out a plan by which the aimed standard can be achieved. The financial support must be ensured, either from the Government or from the local authorities
- 6) Another measure to circulate and establish the idea of Common School is to give birth to the idea of Neighborhood School plan. This entails establishment of school complex in various localities to accommodate the children of the adjacent neighbourhood, irrespective of their caste, sex, religion, community, economic solvency, social status. The setting-up of these schools may help eradicate the trivial discriminations among individuals. Another step ahead, we can achieve our favourite dream-National Integration
- 7) The Common School System will help abolish the drawback of education in rural or semi-urban areas as the educational facilities enjoyed by the urban students will be made available to them. Thus, the rural, underdeveloped zones will get proper attention, as they never did before. Automatically, women of rural areas will feel blessed to share their intellectual identity with that of the urban women. Thus, Common School System has sure potentials for equalisation of educational opportunity

The crying need of the hour is to expedite the process of introducing and establishing Common School System in every nook and corner of India. This will help alleviate the gaping hiatus in between the different classes and communities of the society, bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and above all, the sense of nationality will strengthen the backbone of the nation. If need be, the Government should spend an iota of thought to increase the yearly expenditure on school education

Invariably, the society can usher in brighter prospective individuals in the days to come
Who knows, the dream once deemed to be a pipedream may get translated into reality!

THE STEPS AND MEASURES TO ESTABLISH COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

L.D. GUPTA

Child is the father of man. The strength of a nation are it's people Men and not Homo sapiens will carry a nation forward. National reconstruction will occur only if they get equal opportunities for their development. The preamble of the constitution which we adopted on the attainment of freedom envisages

- Justice-social, economic and political
- Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.
- Equality of status and of opportunity.
- To promote fraternity assuring the dignity of individual and unity of the country
- The constitution enshrines a variety of provisions to develop an egalitarian and integrated society Of course, the chief instrument for the purpose could be the right education system But, soon after it was realised that education itself was tending to increase segregation

An education commission was therefore set up under the leadership of Dr D S Kothari They brought out a report titled *Education and National Development* It has pointed out that if a social change on a large scale is to be effected without violent revolution there is one and only one instrument and that is '*Education*' The report very aptly prefaces with the sentence "The destiny of a nation is shaped in it's classroom "

While criticising the public school system the commission has observed that this system reserved for those who have the capacity to pay high fees, was transplanted in India by the British administrator We have happily clung to it because it happened to be in tune with our traditional hierarchical structure The middle class in charge of charting development plans was traditionally a strong urban lobby Hence a large chunk of resources was to go for higher education To change the trend new financial arrangements will have to be worked out

Education has unfortunately been commercialised by these so called public schools which to all intents and purposes are a misnomer They are not meant for the general public. They have given rise to the dual system of education - i.e for the affluent and for the poor This has led to stratification and fragmentation of society Education seems to have become a commodity which can be purchased by those who

can pay for it. We witness separating, fissiparous, criminal and extremist tendencies in a number of states leading to erosion of national cohesion and emotional integration.

The recommendations of the Kothan commissions (1964-66) to move towards the goal of common school system and the 1968 National Education Policy stating that common school system should be adopted to promote social cohesion and national integration and the endorsement and reiteration of 1986 N.E.P. in this context seem to have been lost sight of.

But, we need not despair or get cynical. Certainly, sporadic efforts are being made by the government and the N.G.O's here or there to bring the children from the rich and the poor sections of the society together. Some of the high fee charging schools are admitting the children of the weaker sections and they are provided necessary concessions and financial aid.

Some of the people the writer has interviewed are of the view that it is simply a cry in the wilderness and merely an El Dorado. But, though tough this is not an impossible task to achieve. The two cadres have to work in unison in their day to day life. Life in exclusive cramped cells is unthinkable.

Ours is a composite culture with a pluralistic democratic society. Therefore, it is a sine-qua-non for the unity of the country that we should combat the evils of social segregation and disintegration and bring the constituents together at the earliest possible stage, when they have no prejudices of colour, creed or power or pelf and their minds are like a clean slate on which new impressions can be easily embedded. Undoubtedly, a bold and imaginative policy shall have to be framed to realise some tangible results. No amount of legislation will help in the matter. All that we need is a change of heart as Dr. Ambedkar the architect of our constitution stressed when the issue of reliefs to the S.C./S.T. was being discussed. However, a few broad outlines are indicated below:-

- a) Politicise the issue. Make it a mass movement. Bring it in the public arena so that there is pressure on the 'rulers' to do more. Make the under privileged aware through social opportunities.
- b) Let the echelons and the executives feel in their heart of hearts that education is not just a welfare activity, something which can be postponed in preference to irrigation, power, steel mills or big plants. Let them understand that there is an umbilical link between M.L.L., economic growth and national development, and that investment in human capital brings in more stable and lasting dividends through over a period of time.

- c) Provide reasonably adequate amenities in all schools as assured under the Operation Blackboard (O.B.). Funds should not lag in equipping the schools with suitable infrastructure.
- d) The schools in a certain locality should be opened to all the children in the areas and subsidised by the government, affluent parents and the philanthropic persons and organisations.
- e) The school governing boards should comprise parents academicians, industrialists and social activists of the area. A culture of autonomy should be developed so that the school authorities could help the institution to it's maximum potential
- f) The teachers should be allowed to 'build' themselves and to teach. Only competent teachers with good moral values should be recruited in all schools
- g) The common school system should be tried as a pilot project in some manageable blocks.
- h) Schools should be named after eminent persons in various fields rather than after the leaders of communal organisations.

To conclude, it may be reiterated that common school system alone will promote an egalitarian and integrated society. There is a need for determined and vigorous action in this direction. This is not the responsibility of the government alone. The community is to share it whole heartedly in the best traditions of our ancient legacy. Unrelenting tirades will have to be traded on the commercialisation of education through a steely resolve. Radical reforms are not the outcome of one blow. They are the culmination of a process.

TOWARDS A COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

MRS. LILLY JOSEPH

Education for Development

Education, according to the National Policy of Education, 1986, is "a unique investment in the present and the future" It is a "crucial area of investment for national development and survival" and is "essentially for all and must lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities" While accepting the Kothari Commission recommendation for a radical reconstruction of education, the NPE of 1986 found education to be essential for economic and cultural development, national integration and for realizing the ideal of a socialistic pattern of Society The essential prerequisites for education to perform these functions were:

- i) to relate the system more closely to the life of the people,
- ii) to expand educational opportunity and raise the quality of education,
- iii) to lay emphasis on development of science and technology; and
- iv) to cultivate social and moral values

Problems of School System

It is unfortunate that these pious statements have not been matched by any substantial progress in building up a National system of education the reasons being the vague and non-specific nature of the policy and the lack of a concrete plan of action for implementation. Elementary education in India suffers from the following:

- i) Resources for expansion of educational opportunity is too little. The poor masses and the girl child, are deprived of the three 'R's India has world's largest population of illiterates, despite 'Total Literacy' campaigns,
- ii) The fossilized learning methods keep many children away from school According to UNICEF, 80% of those who have never enrolled in a school stated lack of interest as the main reason. Inflexible school timings, overcrowded class rooms, lack of teaching aids, unqualified teachers, irrelevance of education, heavy syllabus and unfair treatment of children have been proved to be the root causes of poor enrolment and high drop out rates. 'Joyless learning' is one of the reasons for the poor state of educational development (National Advisory Committee headed by Prof. Yashpal).
- iii) The 'public schools' have become the preserve of the rich or powerful, their educators being frightened and confused automatons dishing out rote learning. In the race for the highest mark, the competitors are very often the parents. The child's mark sheet becomes a prestige issue. There is also the question of preparing for a career.
- iv) There are problems of school administration that impinge on the quality of education These include the processes of admission, finance, aspirations of parents and teachers, recruitment, training, reward structure and career growth of teachers, limitations to innovative teaching due to lack of facilities and forward looking administrators;

- v) The present school system churns out functionally illiterate young adults. Basic functional literacy and numeracy is lacking among 40% of students after school
- vi) Teacher training is defective as many trained teachers are not able to handle children with special needs. A quarter of Newly Qualified Teachers cannot cope with children having emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- vii) The teaching profession, due to the poor reward structure and career development opportunities, has failed to attract the best talent.

Common School System

The concept of common school has remained vague. What we have is a fond wish to "improve standards and to provide free studentship to prevent social segregation". The 1979 draft policy was a bit more specific by floating the neighbourhood school system as a road to common school system. The 1986 policy proposed model residential schools to provide opportunities to poor but talented children for a quality of education in existing Government Schools and enable public schools to pursue education as a social service rather than a business enterprise. India's children do not need model schools but functional schools

Some Public Schools have tried to reach out to the neighbourhood poor. Reservation of seats for the poor was 50% in Sahodaya, Delhi and upto 25% in St. Michael's, Delhi and St. Xavier's, Delhi with graded fees and free remedial coaching "to enable such children to aspire beyond a municipal education". Springdales, Delhi, selects for Std V, every two years, 20 exceptionally bright children from the city's municipal schools. For the next two years these children are kept in a separate section and intensively coached. In Class VII they are integrated with others and cope very well. St. Francis de Sales, Delhi, has a Hindi medium section for the poor from class I to X. They are integrated into the main stream in Standard XI. St. Paul's Belgaum has found it necessary to change many structures including medium of instruction, uniform and promotion policy. The policy of "pay-as-you-can" has failed as most parents want to pay the lowest possible amount.

These experiments show that goals of common school approach is achievable. These need to be enlarged to encompass all public schools. Some suggestions follow.

- i) Identify villages with maximum adult literacy rate, highest drop out rate and lowest enrolment rate and start functional literacy programme there with the help of local Panchayats and Non governmental agencies,
- ii) Ask all public schools to adopt a slum or village for spreading literacy on a prescribed syllabus and time allocation through specially recruited and trained staff for that purpose, one fifth of the income of the school in each year should be set apart for this purpose. The teachers working in functional literacy programmes will be placed in the usual pay scales as per their qualifications but they will be given two advance increments.
- iii) Evolve a professional teachers' training programme in functional literacy, equivalent to B Ed to man the functional literacy programme in public schools. The programme must be designed by NCERT and 25% of seats in Teachers Training Institutes must be in this stream of specialization.
- iv) Make a study of the cost of education along with overheads in public schools and prescribe maximum rates chargeable and minimum salary payable. For every student drawn from the economically and socially weaker sections in the normal stream of the public school, government will reimburse the cost and the student will have free education.

- v) Improve quality of education in government schools through increased investment in educational infrastructure, better motivation of teachers through Seminar and other forms of continuing professional education etc

THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

M. Mascarenhas

Both, the Education Commission of 1964-66 and the 1986 National Policy on Education have reiterated the need for a common school system. The reason given is this:

It is true that because of fees charged by private managements, there can be a widening gap between rich and poor. The child, therefore, may be selected not on the basis of talent, but on his capacity to pay fees. This could hamper the development of ability and is undemocratic. The rich must identify themselves with the masses because otherwise, the education of their children is incomplete.

The common school system in the U.S.S.R. and to a lesser extent, in the U.S., France and Scandinavia, has largely contributed to the success of the country's development.

This is the main argument given by the Commission and it ultimately boils down to wealth playing an inordinate part in this widening gap between rich and poor, which in turn obstructs national solidarity and diffuses class distinctions.

No one can fault the legitimacy of this argument for the introduction of the common school system in the country. Yet, between the policy and its implementation, difficulties arise. Its success will be gauged only in its proper implementation.

What are these difficulties? (1) a large number of private schools in the country are run by minority bodies. These have been allowed by the Indian constitution to run and administer schools of their choice. Obviously, differences will arise which could endanger the common school system. (2) the linguistic diversity of the country results in different languages being used as the medium of instruction in schools. This poses a problem of matching standards between school and school and between state and state, and in a way, distances itself from a common school system. Also, the presence of bodies like the S.S.C., C.B.S.E. and I.C.S.E., with their differing standards, does not do much either to strengthen the system. (3) schools run by public bodies in many parts of the world, e.g. in the U.S., are well run institutions and patronised by all sections of society. In fact, the primary responsibility for education in a welfare state, lies with the state. If voluntary bodies conduct educational institutions, this is largely because the government has partially abdicated its responsibility. Once this fact is accepted, there is an obligation on the part of the state to run quality schools and not the abject examples that we have come to identify with state and municipal run schools. There is

no reason why these schools, with the grants available to them, cannot match the best schools in the country (4) the Education Commission of 1964-66 mentions that because most of the funds to schools are provided by the government, the government in effect, can insist on great uniformity To me, this appears mistaken notion especially because these funds come from the taxpayer's money and therefore, siphoning them back into public work is no concession of the government If the government wants no fee schools (as stated in the Commission), it will have to fund all schools which it would find itself unable to do It remains therefore merely wishful thinking Besides, a very large number of schools run by private bodies receive absolutely no grants from the government

Where does all this leave us? Having administered schools for several years, I would like to suggest the following (1) private agencies could be asked to sponsor educational institutions, financially and thus make admission to all schools available to all sections of society (2) minority rights, at least as far as schools are concerned, should be, if not abolished, at least realigned more equitably (3) greater uniformity of standards could be sought in the different examining bodies (4) greater care should be taken to run public schools more efficiently by either having private bodies adopt them, or finding able administrators to administer them on the lines of those run by private corporations (5) more freedom needs to be given to schools to see that the good work done by them is not mistakenly considered a defiance of the system Too often, education authorities seem unduly touchy about their rights This prevents proper growth in schools Innovation grows with regulated freedom (6) admission to schools must be made on the basis of talent and aptitude and not on the wealth of the family. The new multi-level teaching being gradually introduced into our schools could provide a suitable starting-point to discover this talent (7) another reason why the standard of education does not appreciably improve is because in trivialising the concept of democracy, we allow rules that can defeat the very aims which we seek to achieve If, for instance, a teacher is guaranteed permanence in service immediately after appointment, there is the danger that he takes his position lightly, loses his capacity for learning and ultimately proves a liability to the school. Tenure in the U.S. is given after a much longer period and that too, after an intensive review of the teacher's work.

Finally, instead of crying ourselves hoarse that private schools are perpetuating a division in society, why not undertake to refurbish the public schools and make them as good, if not better, than the private run ones! In this way not only will the private schools not suffer, the public schools will have a new life of promise. The Secondary

Schools Codes should be suitably amended to encourage creativity and interest rather than, as at present, to list a litany of 'do's' and 'don't's' only.

Solutions have to be found keeping in mind the constraints that line the path in providing a common school approach. While damage control measures will have necessarily to be adopted. One must realise that a totally common system is neither possible nor desirable. Different parts of the country have their own distinctive problems. Uniformity is unhelpful. A common school system therefore should admit at least 20% variations due to the factors mentioned earlier. And just as 80% is considered total literacy in the eyes of UNESCO experts, an 80% common school system should be considered satisfactory for practical purposes.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

MADHU B. THAKER

1. INTRODUCTION

It is, indeed, desirable that children of parents belonging to diverse socio-economic groups, communities and professionals living in the same locality/neighbourhood go to a "common" school. The Maharashtra Government are experimenting with the idea in respect of pre-primary schools. It is being watched with interest and concern.

The reason why parents living in the same neighbourhood send their children to several different schools is manifold. Each parent has a different perception of the kind of education his child should receive. And in a democracy parents are (should be) free to choose schools according to their perception.

For instance many parents feel that their children should learn through English, some others feel that their children should attend schools run by their own community, there are parents who have definite convictions about strict discipline, while others believe in giving children considerable freedom.

2. Why Parents are Reluctant to send their children to a "common school".

Parents have good reasons for not sending their wards to municipal schools, and they are well known. Some of them are

- ⇒ Substandard physical, hygienic and academic conditions
- ⇒ Over-crowded and under equipped classrooms
- ⇒ Ineffective and/or unmotivated teachers
- ⇒ Lack of discipline

Thus, those parents who know the difference and can afford to send their children to what they believe to be better schools do try their best, and often succeed, to get their children into good private schools. Private schools are expensive and those belonging to lower income groups cannot afford to enroll their children in private schools.

This naturally results in a school system where there is segregation of children according to their family's socio-economic status.

In a democratic set up, it is almost impossible to compel parents to send their children to a neighbourhood school. Nor is it possible to compel private schools to admit pupils who are academically below par the standard of education the school tries to maintain.

Discerning parents can only be persuaded to send their children to schools within a "common system", provided they are convinced that their children would receive quality

education in congenial surroundings. Platitudes that national integration can be achieved only when their children learn to work and play with those belonging to different communities, socio-economic classes and cultures will fall on deaf ears. Compulsion in this vital matter will only be counter-productive.

3. Local Effort is the Key

Measures to bring about a common school system should be aimed at gradually and steadily improving allround standards obtaining in municipal schools. Adverbs 'gradually' and 'steadily' have been judiciously used, because the desired goal cannot be achieved in a year or two.

It will take a sustained and concerted effort by a group of dedicated, enlightened, perceptive, knowledgeable and sensitive people to bring about this very desirable change in the attitude of parents. Education officers, municipal councillor's, educators, social workers, members of NGOs and neighbourhood leaders(including parents) should form this group. Funds needed to sustain progress and development should mainly come from the municipality and state government, donations from individuals and corporations concerned with each neighbourhood may also be solicited, obtained and acknowledged. International agencies may also be approached.

Each such group should be asked to take on the responsibility for improving and strengthening school(s) in one neighbourhood - if convenient in two neighbourhoods.

The group should study the local conditions and prepare a plan of action, such a plan should list, in details, short-term, medium-term and long-term measures that need to be taken to make the neighbourhood school(s) attractive to all parents, fulfilling the variegated educational needs and expectations. The effort should be directed towards changing skeptical attitude of parents, apathy of teachers and drab, unhygienic and unsafe environment.

4. Short Term Measures

School buildings should be maintained properly, kept clean and safe. They should be equipped with blackboards, bulletin-boards, furniture, teaching material and library books. Clean water and electricity should be laid on.

Each child should have the textbooks and stationary necessary for work in the classroom. They should be given free uniforms and mid-day meals. Pupils should attend school regularly and punctually. Number of holidays should be reduced to a minimum. The school day should be at least six hours long.

Each school should have its full complement of staff. Vacancies should be filled up without delay. Teacher's absenteeism and lack of punctuality should be checked.

Sincere effort should be made to reduce class-size. English should be introduced as early as possible not later than Std. V. It should be taught efficiently.

Parents' meetings should be held regularly and their complaints and suggestions noted and acted- upon. Some of them could be asked to help in the school

Teachers who can teach higher primary classes should be identified and given the responsibility to teach those classes. Competence rather than seniority should be the criterion

Children who are likely to find an uphill task to cope with learning in common schools should be given a head start by enrolling them in special pre-primary classes for a couple of years to make them ready for learning in the reception class of the common school

5. Medium - Term Measures

The Principal and his staff of a common school should be selected with the greatest of care. The success of a common school largely depends on the quality of its personnel. Merit and not seniority should be the criterion. Apart from their performance during preservice training the following attributes should be kept in mind when making appointments of staff

- 1 Quality of their experience,
- 2 Competence in the subject they are meant to teach,
- 3 Ability to communicate,
- 4 Knowledge of methodology and psychology, and
- 5 Positive attitude to teaching young children. There should be complete transparency in their selection

Principals and teachers who are already in service and are found to need help should be provided with inservice training. They should be provided with facilities like audio-visual equipment and material, reference books and periodicals, duplicated materials and manipulatives. Those who are found "beyond help" should be retired

Measures should be taken to strengthen institutional capabilities

- ⇒ Organisational structures in the municipality should be thoroughly examined and made more effective and supportive of educational activities and responsive to the needs of the common school
- ⇒ A team of experts should be appointed to monitor progress of pupils in every school. They should report to the management committee.
- ⇒ There should be inter school visits both of the staff and students
- ⇒ Adequate funds should be generated to pay for the growing needs of the school(s)
- ⇒ Common schools should establish a network with a nearby secondary school to obtain feedback on the performance of past-pupils.

6. Long Term Measures

To meet optimum space requirement new classrooms and school buildings should be constructed, adhering to high standards of design and construction

Funds for construction may come from the state and/or central government(s), from local philanthropists and international agencies like the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF

To ensure that there is regular supply of competent teachers, the municipality should run a teacher training college of its own. Perhaps two or three local authorities could jointly run such an institution. One of the schools in the system may be used as a demonstration school while all for practice teaching.

In short all steps should be taken to strengthen the teaching activity and maintain standards

Role of the State Government

In promoting the idea of common school system, role of the state's department of education is crucial

It should not be directly involved in the working of common school system, it should only act as a facilitating and monitoring agency

It should select a few local education authorities, urban as well as rural, for promoting common schools in their areas. Such common school systems should be developed as models for other school systems to emulate. Special funds should be allocated for this purpose. Detailed information about the model common school system should be made available. Such information should include

- ⇒ Ways adopted to improve learning achievement
- ⇒ Ways adopted to prepare and motivate teachers
- ⇒ Means of strengthening institutional capabilities
- ⇒ Strategies adopted to improve equitable access
- ⇒ Means of strengthening resource base for education

It should establish an extension division specially designed to provide guidance to school systems that are trying to 'go common'

It should grant recognition to teacher training institutions established by local authorities for the purpose of training local youth for working in the common school system

It should develop teaching/learning material suitable for these schools

It should budget for much greater allocation for education at least 4% of the budget for primary education

It should upgrade teacher development in all primary teacher training colleges by

- a) making H S C. (55% marks) as a minimum requirement for admission to p t c s
40% of the places should be reserved for those who have H.S C. with Science (50%)

- b) upgrading the training effectiveness of lecturers or method masters who teach in p t c.s , ineffective lecturers should be given a chance to improve attending short term refresher/in service courses specially designed for this purpose
- c) Introducing a course in primary education leading to B Ed Degree and encouraging students to work towards M Ed Degree in primary education Such students would form a pool from which principals of primary schools and method masters in p t c s would be selected

It should persuade private schools to admit a substantial number of pupils from lower socio-economic groups in the neighbourhood The government should give them scholarships

Common School System

MADHUMALA SENGUPTA

The Constitution of India had enshrined the principle of equality of educational opportunity, which entails that our system of education must embody the tenets of democracy, viz, equity, social justice and positive discrimination for the uplift of the depressed classes. One of the props by which such an exalted aim can be realized is the introduction of Common School System

Education Commission 1964-66 (Kothari Commission) first broached the idea of Common School. It mentioned about the existing segregation in the educational system in which rich people educate their children in costly private schools while the masses are forced to send theirs to the vast bulk of publicly maintained schools of poor quality. To remove the dichotomy in Indian education, the scheme of Common School System was conceived by the Commission. The Common School should be

- ⇒ Open to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition or social status
- ⇒ the access to good education will depend not on wealth or class but on talent
- ⇒ no tuition fee will be charged by Common School
- ⇒ the system should maintain adequate standard and provide at least a reasonable proportion of quality institutions so that the average parent would not feel the need to send his children to expensive schools outside the system

The National Education Policy 1968 declared that the acceptance of 10+2+3 system, common scheme of studies for boys and girls and compulsory teaching of science and mathematics are positive steps towards the direction of Common School System. To bridge the gulf between the public and private schools, the Policy suggested that the special schools or public schools should be required to admit students on the basis of merit and also provide a prescribed proportion of free studentship

The National Education Policy 1986 pledged to implement these recommendations. While endorsing the scheme of Common School System, the 1986 Policy proposed a national curricular frame work which contained a common core and other flexible components. The Programme of Action specified ten curricular areas. Subsequently NCERT has been assigned to bring out model syllabi and instructional packages. The 1986 Policy also recommended for the setting up of pace-setting schools or Navadya Vidyalaya to nurture special talent and aptitude. These schools, charging no fees, are to cater to the needs of poor meritorious and high achievers. 75% of the seats are to be reserved for children from rural areas along with statutory reservations for SC and ST children. It is expected that Navadya Vidyalayas would reduce the disparity between rich and poor, rural and urban children by providing quality education

It is to be noted further that no country possesses democracy in the real sense. C.Wright Mills in his study "The Power Elite" has shown that the decision makers and destiny builders come from a few hundred families. Most obviously they try to perpetuate

their status through intergenerational transmission of privileges. Prof. Krishna Kumar alleges that education goes on reproducing the elite system, perpetuating the class barrier. Equal educational opportunity as a means of removal of disparity is a myth. We may provide equal access, in fact we have succeeded considerably in this regard, but it is not equal opportunity. It must comprise equal chances of success and, in this respect, the crucial role is played by the cultural background of the child. A. H. Halsey in *Education and Social Change* pointed out that the most significant correlate of achievement scores is the social class and the climate of the school's student body. The Report of Rammurthi Committee 1990 (*Towards an enlightened and Human Society*) observed that Navadya Vidyalaya is nothing but the perpetuation of elitism, as criteria for assessment of merit go in favour of advantaged sections of the society. Against such odds, it is difficult to implement the scheme of Common School. To evolve a democratic education the social structure must be changed and privileges built into our cultural heritage must be reduced.

But probably more feasible solution to the problem of Common School System would be to improve the standard of public system of education and thereby bringing a parity between the private schools and public schools. First of all, there should be sustained effort to push through the national curriculum and uniform language policy. It also requires that infrastructural facilities at an optimal level must be provided to all schools. Special funds should be allocated for backward areas, urban slums, tribal areas. We, the educationists, UST keep a tab on earmarked funds and make sure that they are properly utilized. Political interference or meddling should be resisted.

The development of school complexes may go a longway in ushering Common School System. The 1986 Policy and POA had pointed out that school complex would serve as network of institutions and synergic alliance to encourage professionalism among teachers, to ensure observance of norms of conduct, and to enable the sharing of experiences and facilities. NIEPA had provided valuable guidelines in this regard. The need of the hour is to give thrust to this particular programme. This would transform education into Community Education, dynamic and self-renewing, as obtained in the USA and other Western industrialized nations. School complexes can also fill up the hiatus in the system of supervision which anyway, is slack and irregular in our country.

Method of teaching and the teachers are vitally important for the improvisation of school education. Lately the status of teachers has taken a nose-dive. It is up to the teaching community to regain the lost ground. Again, the Rammurthy Commission had given valuable suggestions for improving the service conditions and assessing the performance of the teachers. Unfortunately a proper teacher evaluation system is yet to be created. The POA had suggested that a system of teacher evaluation—open, participative and data-based, should be introduced. Norms of accountability should be laid down, with incentives for good performance and disincentives for non-performance. It is an important issue which needs deliberation.

The public schools are multiplying a fast rate and the craze for these schools never seem to have abated. The existence of such schools cannot be wished away as constitutional protection is given to them. However, with certain modifications the private Education, even if they are not included in Common System. A parallel could be drawn with English system of education where different types of public schools, grammar schools, comprehensive schools, technical schools co-exist. We should also remember that

private schools in our country enjoy strong public support. Majority of them impart good quality education and are considered to be feeder institutions to professional colleges

However, they also fleece the guardians, charge capitation fees, accept donations and exploit the teachers, as reported by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee headed by Shri Gurudas Das Gupta M P. There is a strong feeling that these schools should be regulated by enactment. The Rammurthy Committee recommended that possibilities should be explored to bring private schools under the fold of Common School System by a combination of incentives, disincentives and legislation. Discussions on this subject should be initiated in right earnest at the decision making level.

In conclusion, it is necessary to mention that the lack of political will is partly responsible for the slow development of Common School System. The valuable suggestions of various educational documents were not implemented or translated into practice in truncated manner. Perhaps this is the greatest stumbling block towards the introduction of Common School System. Public apathy to State system of education is no less serious. People should realize that all men are granted equal, and the economic impoverishment of any group weakens the nation's economic and moral strength.

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COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM - AN IMPRACTICAL PROPOSITION (MY EXPERIENCE IN SEYCHELLES)

MAMTA AGRAWAL

The year 1980, I got an assignment to teach English in Seychelles - a group of small islands in the Indian Ocean - an infant nation with a population of 61000 people, freed just four years back from the British rule. The new socialist government took upon itself to educate the young of the country through a common school system.

In all, there were 35 schools in Seychelles starting from class I to class 9. There was one college which provided a three year course leading to the GCE from Cambridge.

All the 35 schools in Seychelles were neighbourhood schools each covering the neighbouring area. The education was compulsory and totally free. Books, notebooks, stationery and even uniforms for children were the responsibility of the state. The young children were provided with milk and all the children were provided with mid-day meals. The schools were a study in cleanliness. I found in Seychelles that all children went to the neighbourhood school. Nobody tried to get admission in the school other than his neighbourhood. It was because all the schools had similar standard of teaching and similar facilities. None was better than the other. However, when I looked deep into the system, I found that there were no children from the higher strata of the Seychelloise society in these schools. Out of a population of 61 thousand people, there were only 25-30 families which belonged to the upper strata. They all sent their children abroad - to England, France or America - to study. It was because no other school system was available to them in Seychelles and what was available did not come up to their expectations. Thus, even in that so called classless society of Seychelles, there were two distinct classes, the upper classes needed elite schools for their children.

It is evident from my experience in Seychelles that for the common school system to work properly there is one basic premise and that is a classless society.

Looking at our Indian Society, the common school system seems to be a Utopia, only a futile dream which can never be true. The Indian society, deep rooted with classes and caste system which goes back about 3000 years, cannot come to terms with the common school system. It is this society of haves and have-nots that has given rise to the dual system of public schools and the state schools. Both these

systems are very different from each other in terms of educational standards and physical facilities. If you visit a public school and a so called 'good' Govt school in Delhi, the difference would be clear to even the most unpractised eye.

The question arises why the government school system cannot come up to the level of Public Schools in India, as far as the standards of education and physical facilities are concerned. The Govt. spends as much money per child perhaps even more in the Govt school, as a parent does on sending a child to the public school. Then, what is the reason that these schools are so different negatively?

In my opinion there is one basic reason for the difference between the two schools and that is the difference in the accountability of the teachers and other staff.

Once a person gets a government job in India his job is secure and he sits back complacently without discharging his duties properly. This happens because there is no accountability of Govt. school teachers. Their attendance in classes and their competencies in teaching are not monitored. I myself have seen that a teacher teaching English in Govt school is generally deficient himself in that language. In contrast to this take an average public school teacher. He cannot afford to be complacent about his job. He has to deliver the goods, otherwise he is out.

Similarly, the other staff of Govt schools also has a poor work culture. Their attitude is to just get the salary with doing as less work as possible. The result is that the Govt. schools remain shabby, shoddy and dirty whereas a Public School is spic and span and things are done properly.

As long as we are not able to manage the accountability of Govt. employees and change their attitude towards their job, the disparity between the two school systems would continue. And as long as this disparity remains, the haves will continue to send their children to the elite schools. Even the Govt. would find it difficult to eliminate this dual system.

It may be concluded that as long as the Indian society remains a society with different classes and as long as the Govt. school system does not come up to the level of private schools, the social segregation and class distinction will stay and so will the dual school system.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM IN INDIA : A FRESH LOOK

MOTILAL DASH

1. Introduction

School education in India is characterized by two factors which are almost unmatched in any other country. The first is the size of the system and the second is the rate of growth of the size. The system has its own peculiar structure, management methods and funding patterns which are being constantly reviewed to improve the overall position and gear the system for the challenges of the twenty first century.

The paper reviews the historical background and the present status of the system, the policy initiatives which have been taken from time to time and the current concerns and some of the approaches to solving the multi,anous problems .

2. The Historical Development

Traditionally, India had a 'Common School System' - which was the *Gurukula*, where the curriculum, the teaching methods, the teaching quality, students' way of life, the administration were all in common. But centuries under foreign rules has disintegrated the great system of learning. What we have in our hand now is a maze of umpteen boards, syllabi, schools - private and government - that has allowed heterogeneity to creep into our educational system and thereby into our society.

3. Present Position

The increase in the number of schools and examination boards, has not been supported by an equivalent increase in the quality of education. Instead, it has given rise to wide differences in learning opportunities throughout our country in the following areas:

- Disparaty in curriculum structure
- Facilities and Infrastructure, such as library, laboratory, TV and video, computer facilities etc
- Funding
- Teachers' salanes

- Quality teaching
- Teacher-students ratio
- Students' discipline
- Number of holidays
- Extra curricular activities of the students and many more

So, the dire need of a common school system is required to eradicate the woes in our educational system and give an equal chance to the poor and disadvantage for better school education

4. Policy Initiatives

The Education Commission (1964-66) is the sixth commission in the history of education commission in India. The previous ones are first, The Indian Education Commission (1982-83), second, Indian Universities Commission (1902), third, Calcutta University Commission (1917), fourth, University Education Commission (1984-49), fifth, Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)

All the previous five commissions did not deal with education as a whole but focussed attention on different level of education. The unique feature of the Education Commission (1964-66) was not to limit its enquiry to specific sectors or aspects of education but to have a comprehensive review of the entire educational system (Biswas & Agrawal, 1986: 349-351). In recent past, National Policy on Education 1986, with modification undertaken in 1992 also focussed on all aspects of the educational system and recognized the need for a common school system to provide an equal opportunity to all.

5. Areas of Concern

When India is suffering from serious setbacks in other areas like unemployment, population growth, political crisis, poverty etc., in addition to Govt's role, there is a responsibility on each and every citizen in India to strive collectively for having one good educational system.

Next is the concern on resource generation. Government has to pass such laws which forces the industries to contribute a part of their profit towards improving the infrastructure of Govt. schools (Dash & Mathur, 1994, Hallak, 1990). The concept of

'free education till the age group of 14' has to be redefined and modified. Those who could afford to pay the school fee have to bear the cost. Education should not be affected by the whims and vagaries of the politicians.

6. Steps and Measures towards Common School System

One radical concept is what we have termed here as *"Resource Grouping"* for the common school system. Under this concept, instead of having, say 5 schools (in a gram panchayat) - one in each village - which are pitifully short of resources, there can be only ONE school positioned in such way that it is accessible to all the 5 villages and utilizes the resources of all the 5 schools. This combining of schools should be done only after Vth level onwards, as tiny tots below class Vth may find it difficult to go out of their villages for schooling. And also, below that level is not desired. The possibility of making these schools or residential type should also be explored. This model will also be applicable in slums and sub-urbs. Through this model common school, the benefits to gain are as follows:

- Functioning will be more streamlined
- Specialization of teachers
- Quality teaching
- Work culture and team spirit among teachers
- Sense of responsibilities
- Healthy competitions among students
- Centralized monitoring
- Better implementation
- Disciplines can be maintained

Next is the issue of common curriculum. This is the foundation on which the common school system can be built. The results of any National Competition for students of different boards and states exemplify the differences in success results. So common curriculum is a must in all states and boards. This could be a slow and gradual process spanning over a range of 5-7 years for better efficiency. Further the change should be made at one particular level each year so that it helps in bringing about equality in students.

Another idea is to form a "Department of School Education" which should be a perfectly professional body implementing the ideas that bring about the changes necessary for common school system. The management is headed by group of eminent people, who are experienced in their own fields and are professional enough to lead such a huge department.

The system envisaged may seem to be a big task at the first glance, but possible. Of course, forming such a system is itself a duty of the govt. If such a system is achieved, it will ensure the goals of common school system. There are examples of govt. schools, which with the administration handed over to some reputed private educational trusts have improved in performance manifold. But finding such service minded private trusts for every school in the country is difficult. So heavy intervention on governments (both Centre and the States) is highly desired. And also, major industrialists, NRIs, social workers, retired academicians/judges and professionals can be coaxed into forming such socially responsible trusts for improving the govt. schools which are the only source of education for a vast majority of underprivileged people.

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COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

(MISS) MOU MUKHERJEE

Exactly five decades ago from this year the British left India. Behind them we tossed, turned, shook off most of the European moss that had deposited on our pachydermal skin and declared ourselves a free independent Nation and expressed a nympholepsy to stand shoulder to shoulder with all the civilized nations of the world. Unfortunately we had a serious draw back. India, the vedic land, for centuries with open arms had welcomed and sheltered each culture that had come a begging to her door. The result were a multi cultural, a multi lingual, infact a multi faceted race who sharpened their brains under sanskrit 'tols' for the first ten to twelve centuries and accepted the madrasah for the next six hundred or so years. But the British intended us to be babus - clerks to be precise to carry out most of their monotonous paper works. They erected an infrastructure which served their objects on the resting stones of Indian aspirations. But bygones are bygones. Today we have almost a three tier education imparting system with missionary convents at the top rung - as relics of the British raj selflessly serving the 'creme' and the downtrodden alike of the society. Secondly, private run schools clinging desperately to the remnants of a system called discipline for a bid to survive and thirdly government run schools mostly in vernacular languages doling out food or grains to people with almost a prayer which can be lipread "Step in to my parlour . . .".

Could anyone on earth or perhaps hell say, why is motivation needed to ensure the parents' eagerness to enroll a child into a school? Why is the government proposing to make it a compulsory right - duty to claim/impart education. The answer is simple. The gerrymander called politics has so far meddled with the ultimate target of education itself. A poor artisan sends his child to school thinking of educating him and gets a teenaged boy some eight to ten years later just shour of finishing school, semi-literate, capable of reading out a poster in the wall may be and no more because a simple pass in the school finishing level requires a lot more than what the school or perhaps the teacher is prepared to give. So where does the student find himself? The rotation of the earth or the essentiality of oxygen or the boiling point of water is of little help to him when again he has to start is of little help to him when again he has to start earning a living as a craftsman or a farmhand. If somehow he manages to cross the

tenth standard hurdle, he most probably will be found standing at the end of a queue for the job of a peon clutching his certificate. Anything less is a dishonour for him.

So where have we gone wrong? Several diverse isochronous boards fail to bring about the much talked about unity. What the dire need of the hour is the Common School System centrally operated with required measures of decentralisation for operational efficiency which will teach the son of a farmer about seeds, fertilizers, manure, farm machinery and the like only to the extent his tender mind can bear, so that after eight or ten years when the system loosens its grip on him, he will not find himself cramped with knowledge other people need. Let us come clean.

The new Common School System as proposed should change and in fact revolutionize the concept of education. The counselling methods should be restrained from being directions for cramming, changed methods of evaluation should be introduced and what is most important is the recognition of the small, little efforts of a student in his accomplishments.

Hands off training on a choice of a number of courses, inculcating a sense of dignity of labour as visualized by the constitution, in the student will get a student properly educated - education as desired, - knowledge, proper character formation with a capability to survive and flourish in society.

If the school equips a student with the knowledge which he can fall back upon, compulsory education will not be needed to be enforced, it will be demanded. Unemployment and under-employment will be reduced to minimum.

Positive steps to this direction will require the segregation of blocks and sectors throughout the country where such schools are to be set up. Stress being laid at those areas where conventional schooling has not yet spread its tentacles. Identification of occupational pattern and possible economic-employment producing factor around the area need to be high lined and allied courses in the schools offered which can feed these sectors which will help arrest the ever migrating flow of educated rural youth to the metros for productive employment. Setting up of a single board system and granting recognition to such boards or even merging such boards with any existing boards/councils to grant equal status to the term and certificates of a common school with that of conventional school, so that any student of a common school will not get discriminated against when he goes in for higher studies.

A totally new method of evaluation to banish the system of dishonesty adopted by the students needs to be there to make the whole effort a success.

Every argument apart, with the proposed addition of Article 21 (A) of the constitution, making education compulsory, the common school system would come as a life saver, introduced with right measures, could set for the world a trail blazing example of what an economically poor nation with rich independent thinking can do

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

P.J. LAKHAPATE

Abstract

Common School System is not a new concept. Answers to the questions such as what is common school system, why is it required, what are the indicators of absence of common school system, what are the problems associated with it, what is the path forward for implementing common school system, are discussed in this article.

INTRODUCTION

Education system is an industry. This industry is characterised by massive size, rapid growth, escalating demand and sharply rising costs. Education generates value, influences mentality of nation and conditions people's attitude towards work, cooperation and relations with neighbouring countries. Thus, education obviously contributes to human resource development, however, the impact of education is far better through the implementation of common school system.

WHAT IS SCHOOL?

As per Oxford dictionary, it is an institution for educating students for giving instructions in special subjects.

WHAT IS COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM?

A School which is common to whole human race notwithstanding differences of religion, caste, creed, colour, language, nationality, sex, economic status and location. The syllabus or the course content of this school is uniform throughout the country. The admission to such schools shall be based on merit.

WHY COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM IS REQUIRED ?

The common school system is required to

- ⇒ promote social cohesion
- ⇒ prevent class distinction
- ⇒ act as powerful instrument of national development in general and social development in particular
- ⇒ generate values, influence mentality of nation and condition people's attitude towards cooperation with each other and neighbouring countries
- ⇒ promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society
- ⇒ secure equal opportunity and social justice in education
- ⇒ promote free movement of subject from one place to another

WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS OF ABSENCE OF COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM?

The answer to any of the following question is yes, then it indicates that we do not have 100% common school system

Are there any schools which are

- ⇒ exclusively for males or females?
- ⇒ having different medium of instructions?
- ⇒ meant for particular caste, creed, colour and religion?
- ⇒ so costly that only affluent society can afford it?
- ⇒ having different subjects and syllabus for different standards?

HOW TO ESTABLISH COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM?

- ⇒ considering the global framework and fast technology development all over the world it is absolutely essential to have English language as medium of instruction. Obviously English language should be first language. Compare to other developing countries our progress rate is already very slow. By not implementing English language as medium of instruction, our progress rate will further slow down.
- ⇒ To promote national integrity second language should be Hindi.
- ⇒ Third regional language (although it is not necessary to have third language) can be considered upto certain standard only for purpose of convenience.
- ⇒ other subjects and syllabus for each standard shall be same throughout the country.
- ⇒ These schools shall be open to all human beings irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion, sex etc.
- ⇒ Government and local body schools shall be upgraded through the provision of adequate infrastructural facilities and academic input.
- ⇒ A suitable time frame of 15-20 years may be considered for achieving 90-95% common school system. To achieve this a close monitoring of this progress is required.
- ⇒ The elite schools shall be forced to take social responsibility by sharing their facility and resources with local government institutions, e.g. taking up community activities, facilitating the access to children of the disadvantaged groups.
- ⇒ The elite schools can be made more egalitarian by requiring that they fill up a proportion of seats by meritorious students from backward class such as schedule caste, schedule tribe. Enrollment of such students can be facilitated by provision of scholarships.
- ⇒ Access to the school shall be strictly based on merit irrespective of whether it is a private or government school.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM?

- ⇒ As it is, an education system is fast growing industry. Expenses on education system increases much more rapidly than GNP (Gross National Product). Conversion into common school system lead to additional expenses. Since investment in education is

the best among all other investment, at least 6% of national income should be allocated towards education

⇒ Considering the high cost of education the spread of OPEN LEARNING SCHOOLS are recommended. At present there are only 5 universities in India. Advantages of open learning schools are

- a) It is cost effective
- b) Cost of classroom is eliminated
- c) Cost of transport is eliminated
- d) Travelling time is eliminated
- e) Open and relaxed entry is possible
- f) Learner can learn at their convenience
- g) Multimedia approach to education is possible
- h) Excellent for higher level education
- i) Life long education is possible

⇒ Conversion of present school system into common school system involves a change in system. For any change in system there are always some resistance to change. This resistance will call for lot of debate and discussions. Thus some time delays are expected

⇒ Once it is agreed to have common school system detail survey/orientation is required to decide what is to be taught? What is appropriate to teach? What are suited/implicit criteria for success/failure? This survey calls for a systematic organisation. In the absence of this organisation it is not possible to perform the tasks effectively as planned and expected

⇒ Since education is a self escalating industry there are always a pressure on education system for further expanding. In addition to financial constraints, human resources constraints will be severe. To solve this problem a top-down approach is essential i.e. First change the syllabus at higher level. Once the trained manpower is available subsequent change can be made at lower level

⇒ A continuous advancement of technology makes the problem more severe. It is recommended to establish an independent voluntary organisation called "CITIZEN FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION". Who can give expert guidance

In order to make the education more fruitful it is necessary to review the contents of the education system. Application oriented knowledge involving COGNITIVE PROCESSES must be included i.e. student must be able to compare, classify, induce, deduct, analyse errors, decide, define, solve the problem, analyse prospectively etc

WHAT IS THE PATH FORWARD FOR IMPLEMENTING COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM ?

- ⇒ Arrange a committee who will be responsible for preparing a plan
- ⇒ collect the necessary data to assess the present situation
- ⇒ Based on the present information and available resources prepare an action plan
- ⇒ once the action plan is approved, implementation can be carried out in a phased manner such that outcome of new system is geared to the society needs
- ⇒ collect the feedback data after reasonable periods and update the system as required

THE COMMON SCHOOL CURRICULUM REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEW FRONTIERS

Raghuvir Verneker

On the threshold of a new era, it is appropriate that we re-examine our educational path towards progress

The need to promote National Integration, National Identity and National Development through education has been reiterated through the Kothan Commission Report (KCR) and National Policy of Education 1986. Three decades after emphatic articulation but hesitant moves, we still have a long way to go quantitative going notwithstanding. The national Preoccupation seems to be hopping from Commission to Policy, and Discourses to Seminars, while successful implementation remains wishful thinking.

The KCR, the milestone education document, recommended the CSS to regulate the then existing system, best with wide disparities in approach, institutional structures and funding. It provided the conceptual schema for educational growth through structure management. This concept can be functionally implemented is exemplified by the state of Goa. This has been chosen as a reference case due to the author's first hand recent experience as the Chairman of the State Education Board.

Goa vis-a-vis Common School System (please see annexure)

Prior to Liberation (1961), there were just a few English medium schools managed by private bodies, and a handful of State in run Portuguese. medium institutions. There certainly was no initiative or program for mass education, which began only in 1962, when the rest of the country was in fact at its first exercise of educational review and reform via the Kothan Commission.

Goa has high urbanization, high socio-economic parameters, a socially cohesive school population, (even the very rich opt for mainstream schools, where their children rub shoulders with children of other economic strata). Access to school education is not the problem in Goa. In fact there is surplus of access, with decreasing school

enrolment due to successful family planning ironically the mass switch over to English medium at STD V removes discrimination in access to educational avenues

Goa could perhaps be showcased as a fine example of functioning of CSS. We seem to be performing well on quantitative parameters. However, quality in terms of relevance for the job made and preparation for competitive situation seems to elude us. The dropout rate is still a major concern. Private institutions seem to have sustained the efficacy of system as it is. Direct Govt control as seen has not helped.

Conceptual paradigm of the CSS recommendations

- ⇒ Focus on structures, their administrative control, and supervision
- ⇒ Top down design and control where the practitioner teacher is told what to do

That model of planning has changed dramatically over the past five years. But our system is contextually inadequate, with its genesis in the mid twentieth century imperatives of post war era. When the country had just won freedom and was grappling with the problems of nation building, Education for globalization was not on our agenda. Today the India has leapfrogged from an agricultural to a post Industrial Society. The future will not be more of the present we must evolve and use alternate models of planning.

Info-technology is already cracking the formal education system. Learning is no longer governed by location, institution and teacher fronted classroom. Information is accessible to all. To meet the demands of this ever-changing cyberworld, the system will have to diversify, be flexible, supportive and creative. Virtual school is an exciting reality. Over a million students in U.S. have opted out of formal system to home learning.

In spite of global changes, Goa is still required to ensure not only equitable access, support, mechanisms for success. It will however need to be recognized, reconceptualized in its orientation, function and priorities. This presentation perceives CSS in terms of empowerment as against the concept of control as the management lever of the system, the need for the curriculum to enhance school effectiveness through learner achievement and classroom processes. Our education system has emphasized too much on bureaucratic regulatory mechanisms, external to the

institutions, and not enough on the internal institutional characteristics. We need to foster a professional culture in schools. In managing our schools, we have forgotten our classroom. **Empowerment must mean teacher empowerment (professionalization) and learner empowerment.** Educational improvement efforts will not succeed unless linked to learning processes, which must facilitate the attainment of articulated outcomes.

In our Common Learning System, the student will need to be alert to social issues, deal with and manage change and be responsible for beneficial change, generate his own workplace congruent to his needs and talents, acquire academic, personal management and team work skills.

The traditional certificate culture is already irrelevant. Specific jobs, for which students are prepared today, may cease to exist tomorrow. While application of knowledge in unanticipated situation will be crucial, proactive and visionary approach will keep him in the forefront of New World order.

The Common Learning Program will therefore have to be based on teaching how to learn, rather than what to learn. It will have to be appropriate for all students, with performance standards for various levels.

Social cohesion cannot be promoted by just common schooling but by devising educational instruments that provide for learners of diverse intelligences. Focus has to be on integrated learning, equity, standards, accountability, and collaboration of stakeholders.

Suggestions

- ⇒ Train the Inspectorate to be supportive, innovative, and effective
- ⇒ Redefine and publish learning outcomes that would contribute to the expected standards in terms of employability skills. Such statements have already been prepared in other countries
- ⇒ Design the evaluation system in terms of outcomes and the levels of achievement. This should go beyond subject specific outcomes
- ⇒ Help teachers, the key agents of delivery system, to be professional in their approach. Classroom Action Research, involvement in professional for a, periodic

retraining for reorientation should be made mandatory, and achievement/contribution duly rewarded

- ⇒ Provide for inherent mechanism for constant renewal in curriculum design
- ⇒ Ensure that curriculum evolves through design regular interaction amongst educators, socialpeers, students, parents, industry leaders, and other stakeholders and must focus on hentage studies without loosing sight of modern pedagogical research viz multiple intelligence and approaches to learning It must provide for diverse talents and abilities, wherein a learner-negotiated cumculum, is also a distinct possibility

The school will have to be accountable for specified outcomes Functional autonomy to schools and teachers needs to be encouraged

Schools should be enjoined to prepare annual academic improvement program, and must be held responsible for set negotiated targets by the end of the academic year. This should correspond in turn to long term targets at state and national level

Progress is not incidental, it is function of imaginative, concerted, practical efforts Let us encourage a variety of educational structures made responsive and responsible by empowered teachers accountable to an outcomes-based delivery system

Government administrative control should work with schools less as a set of do's and don'ts tied to funding and more a range of facilitative mechanisms to build the teacher as a stakeholder of the system It can definitely be done in Goa, it needs to be attempted at the nationl level too

Annexure:

School education in Goa - Some significant features

Student Enrollment at primary level Nearly 10000 preferred medium of instruction at pmary level
 mostly govt. institutions Regional language/mother tongue
 Mass shift to English medium Secondary Schools at std V
 School fundingost entirely by govt directly or through grant-in aid
 Type of institutions (Sec level) Mostly pnvate (govt aided)
 Percentage of Govt managed Sec schools 17%

Student enrollment in Govt managed sec school	around 10%
Private schools (no grant)	2
Pass percentage at Public examination - Sec & Hi Sec	65 to 75%
Enrollment of successful students at Hi sec and Tertiary courses	approx 90%
Free education for all	Upto Higher Secondary Level
For Girls	Upto College level
Literacy Rate	76%

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

P.S. Ramanath

The society in the Vedic and pre-independence period was largely stratified on the basis of caste, creed and religion. Further, institutions set up with the aim of imparting education to a particular religious group or section of the society deepened this division. In the ancient India the aim of education was not to provide livelihood but to enable one to carry on his religious duties.

It is obvious from the fact that the Secondary Education Commission recommended setting up of common schools, that it had its eyes set on the prevailing conditions in India which, perhaps, were more similar to those existed during the Vedic periods and Pre-independent India. What needs to be clearly defined is the concept of common school.

- I) Is common school a system where children are admitted without any discrimination/reservation against any section/class of the society?
- II) Does it mean a system of school following a common syllabus and curriculum with a common pattern of examination?

When we analyse the present system of school in India, we find that the current school existing in India satisfy both the above criteria. Admission in all Government schools is done without any prejudice/discrimination against any section of the society. Secondly, we have many schools all over India that follow a common syllabus and have common patterns of examination (CBSE, ISCE). When such is the condition then what exactly do we mean by setting up common schools?

Does the common school mean suppressing the establishment of private/public schools? If yes, I would strongly oppose it. For a country like India, which invests very little in the field of education, it is highly impossible to cater to the needs of all school going children. The very fact that many of the Govt. Schools in Punjab, Haryana and many other states lack basic facilities for the school vindicates the above view. Whereas there are many private/public schools which not only provide facilities but also quality education. We have schools who guarantee that a child who enters the school would come out as a well mannered nationally oriented, civilised person. Can our government schools guarantee such a thing? Hence I am of the opinion that it would be unwise to discourage private/public schools in the plea that their fee structures are arbitrary. In fact many of the private/public schools doing much better work than the government schools. When the Government is willing to open many industrial areas to private/public sectors why withhold the education?

From the above discussion it is clear that, if what is said about the definition of common schools above is correct, we already have common schools in India. Then the

question arises what could be the reason for feeling of segregation among the students. In my view, the following could be the reasons for such a feeling -

- i Undue emphasis on linguistic base
- ii Segregation of society on caste and religion
- iii Reservation on the basis of caste
- iv Other communal elements

In fact, the current education system has little role to play in eradicating the above said evils as all of them are the results of political decisions rather than the products of education.

It is a well known fact that English being an international language is a gateway of all scientific and technical knowledge but unfortunately many of our political leaders view it as a sign of slavery. In many States like Bihar, U P English has been totally removed from the school curriculum or made optional. In many states the regional languages have been made as administrative languages. Students in these states tend to study their regional language only which in the long run would definitely create unhealthy regional rifts. The graduates coming out of the universities from these states could hardly interact with each other because of the language barrier. Can we hold the educational system responsible for such a situation?

After independence India's primary concern was the upliftment of the backward classes of people, specially, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This is how the virus of reservation stepped into the Indian society. Now this virus of reservation has infected all the sections of the society so badly that this is one of the main reasons for the feeling of segregation. Every section of the community that feels discriminated or suppressed demands for reservation. The very fact that even after 50 years of independence we couldn't free ourselves from the shackles of reservation, instead it had engulfed the society like the tentacles of octopus, is an indication of its ramifying effects on the society. Why can't we think of a country devoid of any undue reservation is best known to our political leaders. When the societies become casteless and classless in real sense the feeling of National integration would automatically seep in our systems as it did during the period of our struggle for independence.

The society in India is greatly divided in terms of financial soundness i.e. some are extremely rich and some are poor. This difference has led to different achievements academically. This has led to an inferior feeling in the minds of the people about governmental institutions. You will not be surprised to hear a layman rate negatively the performance of governmental institutions. He hardly has any faith in their proper functioning. This is one of the important reasons why people, who could afford, always prefer a private institution to a governmental one. Education is not an exceptional area. Therefore, it is imminent to ensure that the governmental institutions really function to their expected potential and stern/strict rules are to be followed for the efficiency of the institutions. Only then people develop faith in these organizations. Once this is established the feeling of national integration automatically comes in. What is needed is a strong will. But who will bell the cat?

From the above, it is clear that the common schools are already existing in India. What is needed is a new outlook to create the feeling of national integration. Some body said 'most of the projects in India die a dusty death inside files only'. I am sure this project is also one like this unless there is a deep sense of devotion to it.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

Ram Krishna Sinha

The Education Commission (1964-66), after careful observation and intensive analysis, gave a clear warning that the prevailing education scenario of the country tends to increase social segregation, perpetuation and widening of class distinctions and to check the not recommended common school system. The adoption of the recommendation is a must to promote social cohesion and national integration. The Government resolved to implement the suggestion, but three decades have proved it to be a dismal failure.

The National Education Policy (1986) too acknowledges that small groups of elites have used education as a pre-rogative of their rule, as a tool for maintaining these hegemony and perpetuation of power. Furthermore, to provide strength, cohesion and dynamism to society, ways and means must be devised to ensure that rural schools match the infrastructure and resources of urban schools. At present the public schools appear unattractive, deprived of basic inputs, a dull dreary place where nothing works, not a vibrant, organic body charging the imagination of people in general. On the contrary the so called '*English Medium schools*' have a glitter and attract all parents irrespective of caste, creed, language or region. The '*cream*' invariably gravitate to private schools, leaving the '*scum*' to rot and stagnate in Government schools.

This trend cannot be reversed unless the government is honest enough to take hard and harsh decisions, all political parties cooperating, ignoring political expediences. This ignominious trend is the result of economic constraints arising from production relations, rural-urban disparities and skewed distribution of income in every segment of society. '*Coaching Institutes and English medium Schools*' have made their insidious way to farthest corner of the country, there are such Institutes and schools at Panchayat level, infiltrated even to populous villages of a Panchayat and attract gullible parents, thus creating schism down to the bottom.

Year after year the Central and State governments give data and statistics about the huge allocation to education sector, this or that percentage of GNP, so much hike in percentage compared to last year or plan, but in fact it is naught. More than ninetyfive percentage of the allocation is spent on the salaries of teachers and practically nothing remains to strengthen infrastructure and enrich educative essentials. Massive

investment required to change the picture is certainly beyond the resources of the government at any level. This can be realised only by the involvement of local communities with resources and devising of ways and means to mobilise the same. For proper and efficient utilization of the fund thus mopped, the need is also to establish a viable and effective infrastructure for its management at the central, state, district and Panchayat level. The management apparatus has to be freed from excessive governmental control and manipulation by self-servers. In my opinion total power to control and manage the affairs of the school should be given to local communities. The Government should only oversee, may make available experts' guidance and keep watch on how resources are being utilized. It should be incumbent upon the government to provide the services of spirited and dedicated teachers. Performance linked incentive, to teachers and their accountability to local communities for overall performance by students of the neighbourhood, an instrument must be designed to enforce the objectives. General educational planning must have flexibility at the micro level so as to take into account ground realities and tackle the singular set of situations singularly. In my village home (KAJRA, DISTRICT - LAKHISARAI, BIHAR) there are some hundred families of MUSHARS (meaning Rat-eaters), each family having two or three children below the age of twelve. There has been no perceptible change in their educational attainments in the last fifty years. Hardly a dozen of them can write their names, boy or girl ever reaches even standard five. The data is with the government, there is a school, a teacher is also there but money spent is running down the drain. Reason . no micro planning, no special incentive, contradiction of general solution to unique problem. In the same village there are English Medium Nursery schools, coaching Institutes to prepare High School students, the economically better ones send their children to those centres, the more affluent to urban areas, like Patna and Delhi. Caste is no factor in this segregation, the only factor is awareness and economic viability. There is no strand of unity in this diversity, a world divided beyond redemption, everybody running his or her race, the mad dog race to grab more and more power and maintain their hold and hegemony. This sorry state of affairs can be corrected only if the whole of communities in the neighbourhood have a vested interest in the local school, if they are vibrantly involved in its affairs. In a democratic set up coercive measures cannot be adopted, even thought of, the only way out to resolve this crisis of confidence is to enrich and to make the local government school attractive, a centre of excellence so that the whole community irrespective of caste and affluence gravitate

towards it The discussion leads to three factors of the problems. -

- 1 Mobilisation of massive fund for infrastructural changes and enrichment of resources
- 2 Involvement of community in the management of affairs of the school
- 3 Team of spirited and dedicated teachers with missionary zeal to accept the challenge and having flair to work out its resolution

Countwise my suggestions are as follows

Compulsory education must be the the notional goal, *Free* and compulsory education is a fallacious notion, a hollow, populous political expediency when the distribution of income is so much skewed at every level From nursery to plus two level public schools must charge fees from those who can pay Total exemption must be granted to first generation learners, whose families are daily wage earners, are landless or have no pucca (brick-built) houses of their own, etc

There should be an agency to register all English Medium School and coaching Institutes in every district or ward of a town or city and maintain an account of strength of students

These institutions charge heavy amount by way of fees, development fund, donation etc from each student and people willingly pay This amount per student runs annually into thousands at the panchayat or even at village level These should be allowed to flourish but in all transparencies must pay ten percent of the sum thus collected There should be no upper limit of what they charge, sky may be the limit, let who can afford pay

A District or Ward Education Fund should be created in which fees from Public Schools and ten percent compulsory contribution from private schools and institutes may be kept This will substantially supplement the governmental allocation and help resolve fund crunch This will help raise quality of neighbourhood schools and more and more people will be attracted thus developing equity and equality in society.

Any student who has had in the minimum three years of education in private schools must not be given the privilege of reservation, matters little to what caste he or she belongs

Every school have a managing committee drawn from local community with least governmental control who can watch that teachers don't play truant and take classes regularly.

This committee on the basis of ground realities will apprise the District Education Fund management of the needs of the school and how to raise and maintain desired level.

At the primary level teachers from local community may be preferred, who can interact with students and guardians day in, day out thus giving a continuity to learning process, freeing the school system from the bias of stranger teachers

The idea that only trained teachers can teach is a taboo, a sophistication. The Chinese President Jiang bluntly told the media in U S A ***"while there is the problem of bread and employment, other rights, such as human rights, will be ignored."*** This is the spirit when the problem is so acute, almost insurmountable let us keep sophistication aside what is essential in a teacher is his or her spirit and dedication. The government may train them after a stint of five years of teaching and how frustrating most of the Teachers' Training colleges are is another story to tell

In my humble opinion, within the limit of words, the suggestions noted above may strengthen the idea of common school system and may thus help establishing a cooperating, equal and egalitarian society, our cherished national goal

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM IN OUR COUNTRY

S. DALAI

Introduction

Education is the back bone of the society in general and school education in particular. School education is the base for all other future education system and building block of a society. It is not true that the children are the future of a nation, it is the school education which is the future of a nation.

It is very true that education system has a definite creative role in nation building process and recommendation of the Education Commission (1964-66) was in a very right track and not implementing this recommendation is a foolishness and responsible for today's so called imbalanced society. The Common School System could only be the instrument for eliminating the gap between rural and urban classes between groups in each and every respect of social system and promoting building of a whole integrated society. No other system would be able to remove castes, creeds, religious, regional, language, rich and poor differentiation.

Present Situation in School Education

The existing school education system gives us some heterogeneous products, which has different values in different markets. However the products are well defined and easily distinguishable. Here the people like for value added quality products and the other inferior products are discarded. Therefore a situation of imbalances is existing which primarily responsible for disturbed situation in each and every respect in our country. A situation of State or Regional feelings is also existing in our country which is very harmful and a major threat to our country in the process of nation building.

Today's schooling system and adopting western cultures very rapidly, our country is in the midst of changed society, which was not at all perceived. Moreover change or upliftment of society means which society we talk about? Is it only urban? If so what about rural? Was it our aspiration to have a society with terrorism activities and living with evils? Who is recognising this society? Why the so called politicians and intellectuals are not understanding even after the recommendation of education

commission in 1964-66 that the problem of our society is lying at grass root level i.e. at the schooling system?

There are different syllabi in the schools of the same city/town, like State Board, CBSE, ICSE, ISE etc., and medium of instruction, like Regional, Hindi, Urdu or English and a huge gap between rural and urban school education system. Moreover, the syllabi are different from State to State and evaluation and gradation system also varies. Even within the same syllabus there are anomalies between rural and urban education system. With the advancement of computer software system the rich urban people are able to introduce the PC even at the pre-primary level which is not available even to the higher secondary students at rural areas. At present numerous private schools are operating throughout the country which are more business oriented and considered as profit centres. The introduction of modern equipment and adopting western style of schooling are affordable by the rich people only. Studying in these schools, a elite belongingness is being cropped up among the children of rich family at the school level itself. This contagious disease is being spreading very fast in our country and deteriorating the society in general and our country in particular. To combat against this disease there is an urgent need for mass immunization programme in the form of Common Schooling System, which was recommended three decades ago but not implemented till now.

Moreover the children at the age of 2 years plus, when they are learning to talk, recognising their family members and trying to stepping out of home, are being sent to nursery schools the time when he/she needs to know better their family instead of school friends and teachers.

Specific Steps and Measures for Implementing Common School System

Implementation of Common School System should be the responsibility of both Central as well as State Government. In this respect the following steps and measures are suggested.

1. A bill should be introduced in the Parliament immediately and an Act should be passed for implementation of Common School System and a resolution should be taken that the schooling should be compulsory for each and every child.
2. The School Education Commission should be formed at Centre as well as at State levels.

- 3 The task force should include IAS officers. The IAS officers should be appointed at various level up to the Taluka/Sub-division level and education officers should also be appointed at Block level in the villages and at respective region in the city/town to ensure smooth implementation and follow up of the Common Schooling System
- 4 Such school education system should only be established through Government machineries and establishment only
- 5 All private school establishments should be removed and banned
- 6 More and more school should be established and private schools are to be taken over by the Government
- 7 Both State and Central Govt should divert their developmental funds for next 10 years towards implementation of Common School System. It should be considered as a very priority and essential service like defence service
- 8 There should be only one course curriculum in our country but as per language concern there could be English, Hindi or Sanskrit, Urdu and one Regional language. Similarly the medium of study could also be the same
- 9 The system of nursery schooling should be discontinued and children at the age of 4 years plus should be sent to pre-school classes for two years and at the age of 6 years plus they should be in the standard-I/class-I
- 10 Schooling should be inexpensive or free or with a very nominal fees could be charged according to the economical conditions of the child
- 11 The principle of Ram Krishna Mission Schooling with yoga, meditation and compulsory sports etc. could be thought off in post primary schools.
12. Government may also think for health care measures of pre-primary and primary school children by introducing break fast scheme with biotechnologically improved cereal based product. This scheme would take care off the malnutrition part of the children.

As a whole through the Common Schooling System a state of belongingness of the country needs to be created, while providing same opportunities for each and every child.

Conclusion

It is well known that the recommendation of Education Commission for Common School System has not been implemented and the aspiration for an integrated society has not been fulfilled so far, it is high time that Government should choose the right path of

implementing the Common School System without further delay Therefore it is not the right approach now to go in again for a seminar or debate for Common School System We have already lost our valuable 30 years and further debate in this respect would leads to delay in implementing this for another 10 years

If the Common School System is established in our country, it would also be beneficial to the Government to implement certain other common programmes like mass immunization, health care measures etc for the children through the same network Let us hope for a better tomorrow with a stable society and a peaceful nation

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

S. Beulah Jeyaseeli

1 INTRODUCTION

The Common School System (thereafter CSS) as a possible approach towards mass education of a comparable kind at a national level is a constitutional requirement of a democracy such as ours and is to be seriously considered. As this forum extends an opportunity for open debate, the presenter chooses to play the devils advocate by posing a few questions.

All would agree that education is a powerful tool for the emergence of an egalitarian society but education of what kind? All rightly claim the right to education. Does that also not subsume the right type of education? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN (1948) proclaims, "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

The CSS is one alternative but is that the best alternative? Is it possible or feasible in our subcontinent with its vast dimension and many-faceted diversities? To consider this we must know what the objectives of the CSS are.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE CSS

The 1964-66 Education report stated that one objective of the CSS is to provide education in all stages in all parts of the country and equal access to comparable education for all pupils irrespective of caste, creed, class or gender, to ensure social cohesion and national integration but the commission seems to emphasize administrative structure rather than the tools of education such as the curricula, the teaching and testing materials, the examination systems and teachers' empowerment. The 1968 commission reiterated the objectives of social cohesion and reported that education instead of promoting integration tended to be divisive by adapting practices which perpetuate social segregation thus widening the gulf between the classes and the masses. It diagnosed that the heavy fees charged by private schools is beyond the purchasing power of the masses.

The CSS sounds like a Messianic concept where the lion and the lamb shall lie down in harmony but the voice of skepticism asks "Isn't there the danger of all lions becoming like lambs or all lambs behaving like lions?"

The CSS has worked in the USSR but at what cost? Do we want schooling to be regimentalised? The CSS has worked in a few scandinavian countnes but they are small, their socio-economic differences are negligible and the work ethos and dignity of labour is so upheld that the social cohesion is not threatened. The white collar and blue collar jobs do not get differential treatment in society. Can that, work in India with its multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic conglomeration?

3 LIMITATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF CSS

3.1 PHILOSOPHICAL CONSTRAINTS

There is a basic flaw in the concept of CSS because social cohesion is not equal to social equality. Secondly education can be nationalised but can wisdom and knowledge be nationalised? CSS is a corner stone of constitutional democracy but in our national economic front we are moving away from socialism. Free market and individual enterpreneurng, the fall of communistic governments also make us wonder if we are anchoring our education on an absolute anachronistic ideal. "People ask more insistently whether it is possible for a single system of tax-supported schools to provide all youth-regardless of social class cultural and racial origin, history of oppression or privilege ? Berlak 1981 1

3.2 HISTORICAL FACTORS

The caste and class hierarchy of the Indian community as ancient as the Varna System and as old as Manu, but the communal riots and violence are a recent phenomenon. No conscientious educational system worth its name will deliberately instigate communal violence. Even in ancient days the Panchathantra said,

"Small souls enquire 'Belongs this man
To our race or class or clan?'
But large-hearted men embrace
As brothers all human race"

While a couple of decades ago students when asked about their caste for strictly statistical purposes would say they did not know and would find out from their parents and give the details later. But now all enter the school with a community certificate for the government makes it mandatory to receive scholarships. Whether they are really born into that community is a different ethical matter. Can we assign this to a new awakening?

The reservation issue, scholarships, free notebooks, noon meal schemes etc, all began with the best of aims but none can deny that they have also, contributed to similar negative trends. What is the guarantee that the CSS too will not backfire scaling down the standards of many schools?

3.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

'All are equal' 'but some are more equal' Everyone is a human being and there ends our equality. For everyone aspires to be head and shoulders above others in some respect or the other. Social cohesion does not mean social equality. We are born with inherent differences which get accentuated as we grow. There is an innate reaction against stifling our individuality. We all want to be unique in some respect. A resistance to CSS, stems from this innate avoidance of identity crisis. We fear that CSS may smother our uniqueness and make intellectual clones of our pupils.

3.4 SOCIETAL DEMAND

The Government has made education free in all its schools and other government aided schools, but in actual practice only the poorest of the poor or people otherwise handicapped flock there. Many others think only English medium education can secure their children a passport to lucrative jobs and can get them a status in society. So they try for admission in the private nursery schools up to V class or VIII class and later pay donations, use influence and recommendations from MLAs and MPs to secure admission in government and aided schools where one section offers instruction through English. The parents pay a great deal but then deem it as an investment in their children's future.

Similarly most parents are convinced that private coaching will ensure good marks in examinations, even when the school system does neither warrants it nor sanctions it.

The argument is, if parents are prepared to pay for substandard education in tuition centers and commercialized mushroom schools, can they not pay for sound institutionalized education? But the commission says that the fees collected widen the gap between the masses and the classes, which is debatable. But the masses feel that it is a small price to pay for social mobility. Moreover only a few schools of India of the Doon school type can attract only the richest of the land. In most of the million other schools, the fees are not awesome.

Secondly government alone cannot provide for all the millions of schools. Most of the private schools run on government grant which only meets the salary of the staff. But the site, the infrastructure, the furniture, the cost of maintenance, electricity etc., are all borne by the independent schools. In the olden days missionary societies, educational philanthropists, charitable trusts such as the Ramakrishna mission etc., poured money into these institutions. But now foreign aids have stopped and devaluation has dwindled the income from the trusts. To maintain the buildings private schools have to collect fees which is quite reasonable or face dilapidation which is evident in many government schools.

Thirdly the statistics show that most of these independent schools were started with a vision for the future and have rendered yeoman service and one way of acknowledging their trailblazing service is to allow them to continue to serve. Moreover the government schools have only now entered the scene in many places.

To cite one example, in the small town of the presenter, her school is 141 years old founded only for girls when it was considered improper to educate them and can really look up with pride thinking of the number of girls, it has educated. The higher secondary system was introduced there in 1978, as well as in 2 other girls and 5 other boys higher secondary schools where the enrolment is quite high. All these schools are government aided private schools with excellent teachers. Now after nearly 20 years the government has upgraded a government high school into a higher secondary school. Even now it cannot compare with the other schools in its laboratory, library, infrastructure and other facilities. So naturally parents prefer the well-established and well-stocked private schools to government schools, where often due to bureaucracy even the teachers posts are not filled and pupils are like sheep without a shepherd.

On the other hand most of the private schools retain a good reputation which in all honesty cannot be claimed by many of the government schools. Also the lessons from the business world of the performance of public sector companies in comparison

with private sector concerns do not encourage the merger of private and government schools. Therefore we have to seriously consider if it is necessary to pull down the private schools in order to elevate the government schools.

3.5 A LESSON FROM BRITISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Just as India's school system is many splendoured with its CBSE schools, Sainik schools, Matriculation, Anglo Indian, Oriental State Board, Model schools and Navodhyaya schools. Britain also has its prestigious public schools, existing side by side with the state system where every child can receive free-schooling. The public schools have excellent track record. Many Prime Ministers, Bishops, Generals, Politicians, Economists, Educationists, Administrators, Business executives were all products of the public school system, who have willingly sacrificed their lives for their country during its wars and have built it up during peace times.

Private education was abolished in Hitler's Germany. But the school where the sons of the Royal family as well as Prince Philip studied is Gordonstoun in Scotland, was started in the 1930's by Kurt Hahn who came from Nazi Germany in the early 1930's who.

"regarded as a matter of urgency the need
to educate young people in independence
of judgement and in strength of purpose;
and to train them in protection of the weak,
recognition of the rights of the less fortunate
and the worth of a single human life. He saw
the tradition of the great English Public Schools
as a framework within which he could launch
a new kind of education for the twentieth century"

(MC Connell : 1985)

This shows that most schools wish to promote an egalitarian society whatever their administrative allegiance.

British following its reports of Public Schools Commissions of 1968 and 1970 tried to integrate the Public Schools with the state system based on the same principle as the CSS. One of its aims was..... ..to create a socially mixed

entry..... be open to boys and girls irrespective of the income of their parents. The Labour party which came to power in 1964, said these Public Schools were socially divisive. It declared its one aim was to abolish all private education. The (1968) Commission could neither advocate their abolition nor their's integration as the cost would have been prohibitive and suggested social divisiveness could be reduced by requiring Public Schools who could be assisted from public funds. But the public schools continue to flourish. . . . "Enough parents were clearly, extremely happy to pay fees which in 1977, was said to average 1950 pounds a year." "The pressure for places in the school (Eton) is as great as it has ever been, with parents putting their son's name down at birth" (Mc Conell. 1985).

Each Indian State is larger than England and has schools many thousand times that of UK's number. UK's failure tells us that the logistics of effecting a common school system within our multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-racial nation will be insurmountable.

3.6 SUGGESTIONS

Developing countries are often the dumping ground of obsolete techniques, methods or innovations of the ground of obsolete techniques, methods or innovations of the West. Whether it is microteaching, communicative teaching or MLL, India receives the packages a long time after they have been used and sometimes given up in the West. India does not lack for philosophers or educationists or social activists. So educational preforms suitable to our culture and climate should be conceived by Indian thinkers. However we could learn from the mistakes of the West. For instance Corbett 'In much Ado about Education' (1968) surveys the fate of major educational reports of Britain in the last 150 years, in which various committees have dealt with nearly every important issue of education but most seem to have been exercises in futility, effecting only cosmetic repairs. So we can scrutinize which schemes have worked and we use or adopt them. Educational thinkers of cultures similar to ours such as Paulo Friere of Brazil or Raunda of Chile who all work on liberation based education can also give us useful insights not for wholesale imitation but for innovation suitable to us.

Secondly as Michael West said long ago, reforms in education can be attempted only through evolution rather than through revolution. No amount of external pressure or regimentation could bring about social cohesion unless it is born from within and

bonded in our inward being. To effect lasting social cohesion, a sound value-based education is the need of the hour. The 1986 National Education Policy's ten core principles are an excellent start. The syllabus and teaching materials faithfully incorporated them and may be, the present generation will shape up better than we do in terms of social cohesion. The result in education can be revealed only when the present generation become adults. Thus, trusting in God, in the innate goodness of people and the lasting impact of education, we have to press forward, with a resolute will. The values must transcend nationalism and embrace globalisation. A clear sense of right and wrong should be inculcated. The spate of recent news items all stress this (Vide Value Based Education, need of the hour, (The Hindu 18.11.97) K.V Gopalakrishnan)

People need to be jolted of their indifference to other's suffering. Love and Service to all, must become everyone's motto. So first and foremost can we think of a common syllabus for the inculcation of values, dynamic methods of teaching and also innovative methods of testing, of Value Education? All curriculum might now have a Value Education period a week but mostly that period becomes a leisure time for the teacher and the taught. Value Education is prescribed but not examined and our hearts are so callous, our cynicism so great that we do not teach values effectively - A nation wide common curriculum for Value education is much more feasible measure than CSS. To bring about comparable education treating of sick schools is recommended. The Education Commission report of 1968 bemoaned sick schools. The British government formulated various proposals such as cutting the grant or changing the management to deal with schools which are identified as failing to give its pupils acceptable standards of education. (Cowan 1993:17) We can formulate our own proposals to level up sick schools.

Fixing up the lowest common level of performance for each class at a national level is another suggestion. The MLL concept is one such venture. There can be great diversification of courses enabling pupils to take in addition to a common minimum, extra courses which would earn them more credits or grades, which could challenge the gifted children while not frustrating the weaker ones.

Common teacher qualification with its accompanying common pay structure, common textbooks atleast for certain subjects such as social studies, environmental studies, to be followed by mathematics and science could be thought of. But will the publishers obstruct such an idea is worth probing. A common code of conduct for the

teacher, the taught, a common minimum infrastructure, common central supervision are all some measures which will gradually enable the evolution of the Common School System.

Finally each school could be given help in developing its own mission statement, its image and its reputation. As an example of a mission statement I enclose what Beare (1989) says about good schools in "The Curriculum for the 1990's - A New package or a New Spirit?

Beare (1989) says "Good schools have clear educational aims, which apply to the behaviours of staff no less than to students. Good schools target learning outcomes. They believe that every student can learn and is willing to learn. An attitude of success permeates the whole school. Good schools are constantly on the search for a better way of doing things. They do not just talk about good ideas; they go out and practice them. A good school has a good principal who is an educator rather than merely a manager, a person whose interest is primarily in teaching and learning. Good schools concentrate on teaching and learning. They understand that their core task is educating, they devote more classroom time to that task, their teachers direct their energy to academic learning, they test regularly for achievement, they set homework and follow up to see that it is done. There is a school-wide, systematic, regular assessment program for learning. In good schools, it is safe for a student to be curious, to play with ideas, to experiment and to make mistakes. Good schools do not burden either their students or their staff so heavily that time for enrichment, time to reflect, time to participate in recreation or artistic or professional or other educational pursuits are crowded out of the program."

All may not like to be considered common but none could resist being thought of as good. So let us aspire for good schools rather than common schools

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COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

S.SARASWATHI

When the Education Commission (1964-66) made its recommendations regarding common school system, the government at the centre was going forward with socialist reforms in the form of nationalisation of financial operations and expansion of public sector enterprises. Public sector education towards the goal of common school system was in consonance with that spirit and could have been accepted and worked with more ease than at present.

More than three decades have elapsed without any further thought on the issue, not to speak of progress in the matter. The nation is presently undergoing a period of privatisation and liberalisation which is not conducive to common systems. While higher education is faced with problems like capitation fees and low standard private institutions, primary education is faced with antagonistic situations like heavy drop-out and failure of Operation Blackboard on one side, and pre-kindergarten as a luxury and expensive private tuitions on the other.

The constitutional directive of universal education up to the age of 14 years has not been fulfilled. The result is growing disparities based on gender difference, rural-urban residence, social-economic background of the students, financial status of the institutions, quality of the teachers, adequacy of school equipment, etc. The gap keeps ever widening that at the present stage, to talk of a common system seems to be an idealistic fantasy. Still, the idea being desirable, ways can be explored to ensure a certain amount of equality if not uniformity.

The goals of common school system may be defined as:

- 1) ensuring a certain minimum standard of education,
- 2) removing disparities in equipment and facilities, curriculum, and teaching,
- 3) inculcating certain democratic virtues, and moral values,
- 4) achieving universal education till the age of 14 years;
- 5) removing all notions of social inequalities based on sex, religion, caste, economic status, family educational background, life style, parents' occupation and other differentiation, and also eradicating beliefs and practices stemming from inequalities;
- 6) in short, establishing the constitutional principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity, and removing signs of superiority and inferiority.

Common school system is a tool to achieve these goals and need not be taken as an end in itself. It should not become a mere slogan or an election propaganda to win votes rather than equality and standard. Therefore, ways of achieving these many

goals have to be examined without getting obsessed with the term '*common education system*'

Moreover, in these days of satellite communication, dish antennna, cable network, computer linkages, and cellular phones, the school is not the only medium of education. Every child is exposed to some learning all the time, at home, on the street, in the neighbourhood, and in fact, wherever he/she is. Since these places are not the same for all, what the students learn cannot be the same. In fact, what is learnt through a common school system can be nullified by real life disparities.

It leads to a logical situation that the common school system should be accompanied with other appropriate social conditions to yield expected results. One may think of residential schools or homogeneous student community in every school. Neither is feasible or even thinkable.

In the early 19th century, when Americans seriously considered establishment of a common school system, they meant not only schools that were open to all, but also schools that taught the same curricula. The content of education was to be the same. Americans considered the common school system as a minimum right of citizenship. Roughly between 1852 and 1918 all states in the union adopted a plan of compulsory education through legislation. Compulsory school attendance laws were strictly enforced and laws protecting child workers encouraged education. In the same way, compulsory schooling should be enforced in India as a fundamental constitutional right.

It is necessary to guard against a false enthusiasm likely to develop among the advocates of the common system to strike at elite schools as the first step. At the present stage of Indian development, such a step may not be advisable. India has earned a place at the top layer for its many intellectual achievements in mathematics, science and technology, literature, humanities, and arts - a place it cannot afford to lose. Promotion of excellence is as much needed as ensuring a minimum for all. What should be curbed is ugly display of wealth, notions of superiority and inferiority, downgrading of manual, physical work and enormous wage differentials between intellectual and physical labour. Unless this is taken up, common school system will not be able to move forward towards its goals.

Therefore, the nation should simultaneously tackle many problems - compulsory enrolment, drop-out, child marriage, child labour, rural neglect and urban bias, etc. The problems differ from place to place and field study should precede the introduction of the system.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM: ITS RELEVANCE IN PRESENT SITUATION AND SOME SUGGESTIONS

Sanjoy Ray

The present education system, in India, is the off-shoot of 200 years old British colonial rule. In the Post -independence era, the Various Committees on Education, the National Education Policy in 1968 and 1986 etc had advocated profoundly the introduction of Common School System to attain the Preamble of our Constitution for the sake of national integration. Although the Article 45 provides for free and compulsory education of all children in the age of six to fourteen years within ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, basically it remained unachieved. Even after 50 years of independence almost 50% of our total population is unlettered. Instead of Common School System various systems are, presently, in vogue. Broadly speaking present schools can be dichotomised as (1) English Medium Schools mostly unaided (2) Not English Medium Schools comprising mainly Government and Government sponsored Schools (Here in after referred as Government Schools)

The fruits of education are being tasted by the elite and upper middle class families through English Medium Schools. Since these schools serve affluent only, they are making an unhappy cleavage between the rich and poor and are partially responsible for spread of western culture imitation in India. English Medium Schools which follow a different genre of syllabi, abstruse to the students of Government Schools and offer basically privatisation - globalisation suited study to their students are presently getting increased effecting more gaps between the haves and have-nots. On the other hand, Government Schools attended by students from poor and lower-middle class families are considered cheap and insipid for lesser amenities and free of cost and thus failed in its mission. Updated information indicates that the country has about 28 million children out of schools causing a dreaded effect of child labour.

Hindrances: Present situation suffers from numerous hindrances. Dwindling of age-old heritage, patriotism and humanity and emergence of tabloid form. Spoon-feeding and private-coaching based education are outward symptoms of present situation. Some responsible hindrances are:

- 1 Government Schools are getting increased disproportionate to the growth of population for which teacher - student ratio stands high leading to an improper care to the students. This led the middle class families to rush to English Medium schools with an expectation of placing their children to better jobs.
- 2 Poor infrastructural facilities in Government Schools are nothing new. Worth mentioning fact is that even the Operation Blackboard failed to improve the situation substantially. Newly constructed schools are getting unusable within a short span of their construction.

- 3 The syllabi at (5+3) stage amongst the various schools, particularly the syllabi and pattern of questions at the secondary stage amongst the various Boards are highly asymmetrical
- 4 As the syllabi are getting framed keeping an eye on the urban area's affluent class students, so the poor students fail to grasp them properly and ultimately get dropped out inhibited by inextricable bottlenecks
- 5 The enigmatic role of the Governments has plagued the situation. The earmarking of lesser fund, untimely release of book-grants and other related amenities, absence of effective transfer policy for teacher and their unequal distribution to schools are preponderant policy fall-outs of Governments
- 6 Normal classes in large number of Government Schools get affected wide spread terrorism activities and violence have shattered the smooth working of many schools. The trend of religious and fanatic education in some areas have vitiated the arena of education
- 7 Apathy of many teachers to learn more and teach well, their involvement with politics particularly those in Government sponsored schools because of the scope of open politics and absence of transfer, quest for additional income-avenue and moral value declination have impinged the school learning environment
- 8 Quality of majority teachers has gone down significantly owing to the essential qualification for appointment being overlooked and political interference. Rather teachers are being appointed on recommendations or other fake standards
- 9 English Medium Schools are not free from lacuna. The standard of these schools and their syllabi differ from metropolies to cities and cities to towns etc - meaning an inequality and hollow within a system itself. The policy of profit making and resource accumulating craziness are gutting the parents. Lesser infrastructural facilities, home-task oriented study, lack of trained and specialised teachers and vacuous motivation amongst the teachers due to poor-package with untenable jobsecurity in these schools have withered the campus learning process leading to discernible drop-outs and compelling those students to seek admission in Government schools

Suggestions: Keeping in view the deteriorating education scene, the recent decision of Union Cabinet to make to elementary education to all children as Fundamental Right and the present state of the country from all aspects of the author suggests the introduction of Common School System to inhibit further indiscrimination. Some of the suggestions are

- 1 There should be no private schools in future. An uniform and imponderable syllabi should be framed in the interest of large-majority students. However, Government may establish some paying schools with better earthly amenities for the affording class with English as medium of language.
- 2 The present structure of (5+3+2)+2 should remain unaltered replacing yawing teaching by articulate learning.
- 3 Operation Blackboard is to be shaped effectively so that it can neutralise the additional burden of population growth. The appointment of teachers should be unbiased and the Soaring teacher-student ratio is to be brought down. The Union Government should increase the budgetary support to 10% and existing programme for nutritional support should be continued
- 4 Vocationalisation of secondary education should be labour-intensive, agriculture and its allied areas related and should be rural employment prone to check urban migration

5. The concept of Hindi as third language subject to broader consensus, a rational policy towards the growth of all languages, developing sport-skills and talents, better student evaluation system, proper training and better social status for teachers evolving accountability are to be expatiated
6. The syllabi encompassing the values of secularism, democracy, and scientific temper should be capable of diffusing love and humanity and inculcating the basic message that "India is above all"

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PAPER ON "COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM"

Shallaja Mulay

What is education? Is it book-learning? No Is it diverse knowledge?
No Is it the amount of information that is put into your brain? No Then what
is it?

These questions which Swami Vivekananda posed are questions for us, to deliberate upon, even in 1997

Concept : Education is generally acknowledged as an important social function but is ignored Generally, it is believed, that people turn to education as a remedy or panacea, when depressed Whatever be it, education has continued to evolve and extend its reach and coverage since the dawn of human history. Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the time There are moments in history when a new direction has to be given to an age-old process That moment is today , (NPE, 1986 - Introduction)

A solemn reflection on the above quote makes it known that quality education is the only way to national development, survival and contributing to better world order, for education is very important in the development of human potential.

"The philosophical aim of any education, therefore, must be to get each one out of his isolated class and into the one class of humanity" (Paul Goodman)

View on the education system by present-day educational analysts

An educational expert and writer, K.K. Khullar in his paper on "50 years of Indian Education" points out that inspite of several political changes and committees formed to recommend measures to upgrade and re-equip the Indian education system, one of the largest in the world, it has still failed to deliver the goods'

In his essay, he further points out 'that the reason for this failure can be attributed to flawed policy - formulations, lack of vision on the part of planners, non-implementation of certain key recommendations and finally, failure of the government to see education as an agent of change'

Foundation for the Common School System

The National Policy of 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education, in post - Independence India

It aimed to promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship and culture and an attempt to strengthen national integration. It laid stress on the need for a radical reconstruction of the education system, to improve its quality at all stages, and it gave much greater attention to science and technology, the cultivation of moral values and a closer relation between education and the life of the people. All in all, the Education Policy of 1968 recommended taking steps towards a *Common School System*.

On the occasion of the 7th five year plan, in 1985, rethinking was done, giving birth to the 'National Education' Policy of 1986. The cardinal principle of Education being a unique investment in the present and future, was the key to this National Policy.

So the Education Commissions had sown the seeds of the Common School System, but till today, there is no sapling. Why? Because there was no nurturing of the concept. No soil, no water! How can we expect a plant? Thus, the dream remains unrealised.

What were the missing links?

1. In John Gardner's Words; "Much education is monumentally ineffective (For us, till today, it's so). All too often, we are giving young people cut flowers, when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants.
2. High-order thinking was never translated into concrete measures. The slab crumbled, even before the edifice was ready.
3. No normal, linear expansion. Not even, a pace to meet the demands of the situation.
4. The Ministry of Education was re-christened, as the Ministry of Human Resource Development. But no Resource developed. The gaps, the chasms of disparities widened. The social discrimination increased. Thus, Human Resource was undeveloped.
5. The NPE had envisaged not an uniform and rigid system but a broad framework with flexibility. It had implied equal opportunities to one and all, irrespective of any distinction caste, creed, community, economy, race, region, sex. Even the

handicapped were to find a place in the specially framed cumculum, with minimum levels of learning as the root and node of further enhancement. The vision was good, but the mission failed, so the vision transformed into a forgotten dream.

In fact, the Indian education has been tragic. It has been non-Indian, to create Indian Citizens, being based on the colonial education system to prepare clerks and officers.

We are rich with Resources, but our Human Resource potential is poor, untapped, unnurtured and ungroomed! Poverty amidst Plenty, like our Economy!

A reflection on our failure to achieve the Common School System ideal.

- a) Our education - planners had received skills and basics of clerks and officers chip of the same block.
- b) education received was not to become an educationist, a leader in education, but 'ape the west' in everything.
- c) education for the human-being - a humanistic education with affective and effective personality, attitude and value - system, was not received.

Why is Common School System structure important for India

- 1 India has the largest No. of School Teachers in the World - a record of 150 million children in the age - group of 6-14 years and yet, Universalization of Elementary Education is a dream.
- 2 For any education to be complete, 5 principal aspects of a human - being are necessary physical, mental, psychic, spiritual and humanistic.
- 3 India is a country with a multi-faceted heritage and a variegated ethos. 'Unity in diversity' with regard to geographical topography, monsoons, people, sects, regions, diet, dress and thinking is the chief characteristic.

I would express that the Common School System needs to be implemented, so as to maintain our lovely Kashmir Carpets and Shawls with motifs, applique' of the northern regions, the furniture, decor and interiors of the middle regions, the Culinary skills, delicacies of the coastal regions and the mineral riches of our plateaux and plains. It's a mosaic! It's a beautiful ethnic jewellery pageant with colours, art, aesthetics, light, sound and vivacious choreography, embedded, studded like a diamond in the CROWNING 'Glory'!

How can we reach to the Common School System?

Can we attain this goal? Yes

Let's understand our terminology, before we consider the suggestions.

'Common' .. . universal .. . to all, for all, by all

'School' .. . Greek Word is 'Schole' meaning 'leisure'

School should be a place of learning by fun and through entertainment,
not 'the penal servitude' of G B. Shaw.

'System' .. . disciplined, planned pattern, structured step - by - step, well -
woven fabric

Measures to establish the Common School System

- 1 **5+3+2 pattern** : 5 years of primary (I-V) 3 years of upper primary (VI-VIII)
2 years of secondary . (IX-X)
Std. V to be joined to the Primary section
The arrangement of teachers of Std. V - choice to continue in the Secondary
Section or join the Primary on fresh terms

There are no differences in qualifications. Avenues for job - seekers - Primary
School Teachers will be generated

Facilities for extra class or a shift system to be adopted, to accommodate Std. V in
schools with no space.

- 2 **Minimum levels of learning**: Norms of minimum levels of learning to be
established for girls, deprived and oppressed classes, tribals, rural area schools,
handicapped children by a National Testing Agency.

National Testing Service has been envisaged as part of the NPE. Like the
common school system, this service has found no opening

- 3 **Examinations**: Only for Std. IX/X, there should be examinations. Std. X will
have the State Board to Control the examinations. Exams should be common to all,
state-wise and country-wise (those following the State System), but certain facilities of
competency levels granted for the special classes of children w.r.t. geographical
disparities, natural calamities, girls, handicapped. These concessions should be rural
and urban separate, more towards rural, due to a lot of deprivations.

- 4 **Comprehensive evaluation**: Till Std. VIII, no examinations, no detentions, no
drop-out. But continuous comprehensive evaluation every fortnight should be
enforced

The format from the National Testing Agency, but every school apply it to their institutions, following the norms of levels of learning and other criteria

Remediation for those not reaching the minimum level must be enforced

Remedial teaching is not tuition in the commercial sense. It is 'work' input, to improve the weak concepts and therefore, bring the child up to the level of the class

The same teacher may do it or a Remedial Teacher can be employed. Thus, a Vocational opportunity for Special Education Teachers, Remedial Teachers, also opens up

5 **Stream-line Vocationalization:** After Std VIII, let a) IX-X (General) b) IX-X (Technical for Technical trade certification) c) IX-X (minimum Competency Vocational Course) and d) IX-X (open school) be available. At least, every ward of the city one school, every village one school, district/taluka as per the population but within commuting distance, 2 schools to be made available

This facility must be implemented immediately, because vocationalisation is the base of the objective of the Common School System and the pivot of Human Resource Development

6 **Evaluation/Assessment:** For Primary, only grade system to be followed. This is skill - based education for literacy. For upper-primary, only grades. For Secondary, the mark system. But the mark System has to be streamlined in all the States all over the country

The National Testing Service will have an Evaluation/Assessment Dept. which will train teachers, interested in this kind of work. Faculty or haphazard methods of evaluation are marring the little children. What Resources!

A specialised Diploma, in-service training compulsory and a Refresher for this area should be enforced. Renewal of licenses to do this task, like the Pilot licence, if enforced, will give us quality and also integrity. Because, when training is difficult, the challenge is accepted, and choice of selection is available

7. **Special Schools:** Learning Centres for handicapped, nursery, kindergarten, where no other school is available, must be provided. Every village must have a learning centre, with its networking with National Testing Service, under Common School System, to facilitate transfer, change, admission, integration of handicapped, who have reached the level of learning required

Also, Navodaya Vidyalayas for gifted children, Military Schools for those interested should be increased to cater to every State, at least 15% of the population of

that state. In other words, rather than open up more banks, start more schools
Operation School!

Where schools are not possible add classes for special categories of the children, so as to accommodate one and all, in the fabric and network of educational communication

8 **Rural Setting:** Teachers to be given additional allowance, but get work done, or we, will have a chain of our Corporation 'dead' schools!

A special cell for Rural Development (Education) to look after our schools there and to monitor the process of education in the rural sector.

Industries may be asked to establish schools, so supervision, quality and management of funds can be taken care of, in those areas!

9 **Compulsory, free education:** For all children, upto 14 years of age free and compulsory education.

10. **Extension and Reach-out:** The XI/XII can also be under common structure. That will eliminate a lot of malpractice and lop-sided admissions. This move will facilitate our depressed, oppressed classes, our handicapped children, girls in the rural areas, for the age to study can then be made 16 years.

In the rural sector, this facility is very important. Even in the general context, looking at times around, Std. XII should be the compulsory education limit, not Std. X.

If this step is taken, the NPE can achieve its goals and Indian education would be progressive, Indian Youth will grow and not drop-out!

11 **National Open School:** A centre in every state for NOS is very important, for networking District and talukas and villages should be under the fold of the NOS, to reduce drop-out.

In the city limits, let every 1 school, out of 30 in an area, have an open School Class, to accommodate those who would want to avail of this facility.

12. **School Complex:** Idea to be built. This would facilitate Non-formal education, skilled subjects like Art, Craft, Music, Drama, Dance education and also sports and physical education!

Well, let's here in mind that Education is a synthetic discipline which brings about the development of an integrated person.

Common School System will lay the foundation of Humanistic Education - treating students as a person and integrating cognitive learning and affective experience.

Word of Caution and Praise

Common School ~~System~~ requires - ***School Mapping*** to be done. This is a technique of micro-level planning for expansion and rationalisation of educational facilities, particularly at elementary and secondary level of education in accordance with the norms ***This Common School System will make Indian education a social process of living, not mere preparation for future living.***

Let me end with M Gandhi's words

"The essence of education lies in drawing out the very best in you"

Let's all remind ourselves

***"If you are planning for one year, plant grain.
If you are planning for ten years, plant trees
If you are planning for 100 years, plant men and nurture youth."***

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

Dr Shashi Kochar

In a developing country like ours, there is persistent criticism of the educational system. The Union Government renamed the Ministry of Education as the Ministry for Human Resource Development thereby stressing the complex "human" aspect of the educational process. The impact that the kind of learning of one human being can make on all other human beings, all living beings benefits or disastrous consequences. This is why, from the beginning of civilized life, great thinkers, statesmen, teachers and social reformers paid a very high attention to education. Education, in essence, is the overall manner in which the learning process are guided in direction that society at a particular time thinks most appropriate for the good of the society. The objectives, the institutions, the contents and the methodologies of education, therefore, can undergo changes from time to time.

During the pre-independence period we managed with the system of education which was imposed on the people of India by the colonial powers. That system based on a liberal, utilitarian conception of the socio-economic system, brought into being by the industrial revolution thought of man in terms of productive skills, his capacity to earn profits and thus pave the way for the greatest good of the greatest numbers. But with our independence, we committed ourselves to democratic socialism and secularism to the common welfare of the masses, especially those belonging to the weaker sections of the society. As such it was resolve to shift from the 'class' to the 'mass' and that needed radical changes in the system of education. But unfortunately, although valuable recommendations were made from time to time, they were not implemented properly and fully.

As a result of this inaction the system is facing serious crisis due to internal and external inefficiency. We have now reached the fiftieth year after independence. So this is an appropriate time for us to assess the successes and failures in education and arrive at consensus in the future direction in education that will guide us to the twenty first century.

Education is for life. It is a process that takes place through life and throughout life. Education should help to cultivate a strong and understanding frame of mind which helps us in facing the challenges around us.

Before we exercise our minds on the desirability of Common School System, we must come level with present practices. We have established a method of education which makes opportunities available but not easily accessible to many. Consequently, the society is faced today with problems of equity. Of what avail is an opportunity that is available but not accessible to certain sections of the society, availability by itself is no consolation. The committees and commissions have made substantial recommendations for change, they have been accepted by the state and Central Government but the change itself has not taken place.

Even more serious is the menace of growing inegalitarian society in which the education system has been functioning and has added to widening of the gap between the few institutions of quality in the form of public schools with good infrastructure and motivated teachers on the one hand and the mass of ill equipped, unattractive and low level schools and institutions with demotivated teachers on the other, the access to the former being limited to the children of the well to do while the poor educational institutions cater to the children from the poor majority. So the question arises, "How can any edifice of Education stand on such a narrow base?"

The public schools produce snobs without sensitivity to pain and poverty and distances its products from harsh realities of life. Apart from the above, rural-urban disparity has to be removed in terms of providing facilities, quality of teachers and so on.

In independent India, with the pronounced goal of establishing a social order based on the values of equality, freedom and justice, one would have expected the emergence of an educational system with ensured equal opportunities for children of all strata of society. Common School System would have opened up possibilities for the children of the socially deprived and backward communities to go into new occupations and professions emerging in the wake of economic development in the country. This would have ushered in a new social order which would have shaken the foundation of the caste based hierarchical social structure, if not total demolished it. But the policy of privatisation and public school system pursued by the government thwarted this process. In fact the enlightened and vocal sections of the society became totally apathetic to the municipal and government schools education system as their children did not attend these schools. Consequently, what one finds is a situation of utter destruction and deterioration of standard of teaching in the municipal and govt schools which in reality cater to the needs of deprived lot.

This has resulted in a big institutional divide. If education is to serve among other things, as a vehicle of social change, common school system has to be made reality. Lack of proper schooling not only deprives the children of basic facilities but has far reaching implications for their socialisation and personality development. They have no alternative but to go to govt or municipal school where they hardly receive any education of good quality. Whatever education they receive, it is dysfunctional to their growth as adult citizens of their schooling.

Analysis above raise the question as to what else is the purpose of education if it is not creating awareness among people in the form of discontent against the system. And discontent is the source of incentive for change.

The following suggestions may help:

- ⇒ Talented students to be given enriched courses
- ⇒ Govt schools to be upgraded alongwith municipal ones in matter of facilities infrastructure teacher motivation
- ⇒ King and clown to receive education together under the same roof
- ⇒ Admission on the basis of locality and reach of the child and not reach of the purse
- ⇒ Development agencies to given the task of functioning at grass-root level and lend support to elementary education of a comparable quality for it is at the level that new

ideas, behaviour patterns and values can become internalised and rooted deeply in the personality of the younger generation

- ⇒ the question of raising more of resources needs serious consideration
 - ⇒ common education system is expected to generate new knowledge in all the fields within the reach of human mind and has also to evolve principles and methodologies for the application of knowledge and skills for the benefit and progress of the society. Research and development and extension should form the vital part of education process
 - ⇒ Ten core components should be strengthened as they form the basis of learning
 - ⇒ Common school system has to focus on imparting knowledge about concepts and facts relating to different subjects and for developing skills in the area of languages and communication, games and sports
 - ⇒ Common School System can play an important role in integrating the individual into the social system and in inculcation of habits of health care, mental application, management of time and conservation of physical, mental and emotional energy
- Common school system has to be sown seeds where people have respect for life, possess sense of right and wrong, have respect for others' view point and are endowed with spirit of adventure and the confidence to innovate
- ⇒ To improve the state of affairs what is most desired is higher outlay on education

Today's world is the fast changing, increasingly complex world for which we are educating our young students. A world where India's future, our future will be moving into their hands. We have to see our positioning from all angles to meet this challenge. This needs to be added that we have to think of System of Education organisationally and philosophically to meet the challenges that stare us today. Going further it needs to be shared that societies today are ever more urbanised, ethnically diverse, pluralistic in their beliefs and materialistic where the young face a bewildering array of often conflicting values. The growth of so called public schools system and privatisation of Education has done a great damage to widening the social gap.

Whether it remains on paper or becomes a call to action remains to be seen for over the years we have only clamoured to raise voice united of getting the things realized. A good atmosphere for development, hard work and excellence can be built up on through common school system which gives equal opportunities to all (irrespective of caste, colour and creed) so that every one becomes a promoter as well as a recipient of new ideas. The country which has accepted democracy, socialism and secularism as its national goals to achieve development, cannot afford to restrict good education to a privileged few.

INDIAN EDUCATION : THE DEEPENING CRISIS

S.N. SINGH

By the time the Education Commission was appointed in 1964, much deterioration had taken place in the school education and the gap between the classes and masses had widened. In anguish the Commission noted, 'It is the responsibility of the education system to bring the different social classes and groups together and thus promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society. But at present, instead of doing so, education itself is tending to increase social segregation and to perpetuate and widen class distinction. If these evils are to be eliminated and the educational system is to become a powerful instrument of national development in general and social and national integration in particular, we must move towards the goal of a common school system.'

2. Though the Commission felt that certain forces were working towards making education an agent of fission rather than of fusion, it did not care to identify such forces.

3. The Commission had the example of the failure of Basic Education modelled on the concept of Gram Swaraj of the Father of the Nation and given practical shape by such stalwarts as Dr. Zakir Hussain, Ayyanayakam, Sundaravivelu and others. This failure could have provided an object lesson to the Commission. But the Commission, eager to create a utopia, did not even touch upon this fact in its voluminous report. Perhaps, the Commission, loaded as it was with bureaucrats and not democrats, adhered to the words of the terms of reference given to the Education Commission rather than to its spirit. The resolution of the Government of India of July 14, 1964 appointing the Commission mentioned, 'It is now considered imperative to *survey and examine* entire field of education in order to realize within the shortest possible period a well-balanced, integrated and adequate system of national education capable of making a powerful contribution to all spheres of national life. 'The Commission surveyed the existing educational scene but failed to examine it with the result that it prescribed without diagnosing.

4. During the British period, education, particularly, secondary education which is considered to be the backbone of educational system, was entrusted to private enterprise. Indian Education Policy 1913, inter alia, states 'The policy of the Government is to rely, so far as possible, on private enterprise in secondary

education.....The Policy may be summarised as the encouragement of privately managed schools under suitable bodies, maintained in efficiency by government inspection, recognition and control and by the aid of government funds.' (Extract from Government Resolution on Education Policy dated 21st February, 1913)

5. In pursuance of the above Policy, model schools were started in every district town, the rules of the constitution of managing committees were framed, criteria for recognition of schools and rules for the grant-in-aid were laid down and the inspection machinery was strengthened. I had an opportunity of going through some inspection notes recorded by British Inspectors in the first and second decades of this century. The main focus of inspection during those days was what went on in the class room and the school showing excellent results were given efficiency grants.

6. The above Policy of the Government of India held its own till Independence. During this period, spurred by the Freedom Movement, dynamic energy was released from the dormant and stagnant Indian society, and large number of schools, both primary and secondary were started by the private bodies. A discerning eye could notice that in many cases, private schools became models to be emulated by Government schools rather than the other way round.

7. Came Independence and a swarm of self and power seekers were let loose on the institutions, built up assiduously during the Raj. To cite the typical case of Bihar, an act to control secondary schools was passed in 1960 and under the rules made thereunder, the Director of Public Instruction (read Education Minister) was to nominate three members in the managing committee of each recognized secondary school. Under the new dispensation, all the managing committees were reconstituted and within 2 or 3 years, most of the sponsors of the schools-sponsors who had contributed land, building, furniture, equipments, money and labour and who had the well-being of the institutions at heart, were thrown out and adventurers (read political hangers-on) were inducted into the managing committees. Scores of law suits from each district were filed in the high court and the educational institutions became the battle grounds or political hoodlums. Teachers too got involved in the faction fights and the victims were the pupils, learning and teaching.

8. Those were the heydays of minority schools-particularly mission schools. The number of pupils in them swelled. They could charge high fees, they manage

their own schools, they received Government grants and by and large, they were areas of peace in the turmoil prevailing all round. Naturally, people, who were concerned about the education of their children crowded these schools. The English medium schools among these mission schools were patronised by the rich, neo rich and up-coming members in the society. To cite an instance, Boys High School, Allahabad, an English medium school, which had to sell its building to the Government to meet the mounting deficit and became a rent payer in its own building, now has on its roll about 4,000 students, besides setting up two additional branches in the town

9 English medium schools modelled on these exclusive schools also came into being by the effort of that section of the Indian society that is withdrawing from the main stream

10 Corruption and gross mismanagement seeped into every sector of the Government. The postal services that were so efficient during the Raj that a letter from anywhere to anywhere hardly took 4 days to reach, now takes weeks or even fortnights if it reaches the destination at all. So the Government has devised Speedpost for those who can afford, leaving the people at large to the mercy of the 'snail mail'. Courier services and fax are other additions for the rich. Civic services have deteriorated, so the rich are having their exclusive colonies with their own water supply, electricity and security services. Hospitals are coming up with five star facilities where the rich are treated but their servants are sent to government hospitals which have been starved of funds because those who could have influenced decisions are not using them.

11 How could education remain unaffected by this decadence? The trend was there but POLITICS and EDUCATION COMMISSION provided the gentle push to the system to fall into the abyss.

12. I elaborate

Education Commission recommended the establishment of a common school system of public education "which will be open to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic and social status" and in order to create such a system, the Commission recommended:

- 1 Provision of free education upto the school stages,
- 2 Uniformity in the service conditions, pay scales, method of recruitment and retirement and other benefits;

3. Creation of a web of bureaucratic educational administration including creation of Indian Education Service, District Education Board and State Education Board etc

13 For popularity hungry state governments, these recommendations came handy. States abolished tuition fees, a meagre amount per child which even a labourer could afford to pay. The results were two fold:

1. Income of the government from the schools disappeared and expenditure on primary education increased due to expansion affecting the finances of the states;
2. Education became gratis with inefficiency added to it. When the parents paid the monthly tuition fee, howsoever small the amount was, they expected education at least worth the amount they were paying. Pupils in general lost interest in class-work and started crowding the chambers of the tuition mongering teachers.

14. Under the pretext of bringing about uniformity in recruitment but actually for dispensing favours, state governments created service commissions for the recruitment of teachers mostly with non-officials as chairman and members and the teachers' job became a saleable commodity. The present condition is that a candidate, if he wants a job in a non-government school, first has to pay for being selected, he has to pay for being posted by the District Education Officer, has to pay to the school manager for being allowed to join and lastly, to pay the principal for the making the first paybill, and the total sometimes comes to Rs. 50,000/- to 100,000/-. What kind of education can one expect from such teachers.

15. Degree based uniform payscales put a discount on merit. Meritless candidates either fled the system or got frustrated or lost interest in teaching.

16. Previously the managing committee was the appointing authority of teachers, their paymaster and controller of the service conditions. With the increase in the salary of teachers and the government grants, the state started paying it direct from the government treasury. The decision of the managing committee began to be interfered, stayed or cancelled by District Education Officer. The managing committees lost hold over the teachers and they became more interested in any other thing than teaching.

17. Recommendations of the Commission that envisaged improvement of teaching standards have been put on hold.

18 The credit side of the recommendations of the Education Commission is that the condition of teachers had ameliorated so much so that one can spend a hundred thousand for buying a position in a school and the debit side is that the education, teaching and learning have been banished from the schools that were to constitute the Common School System of Public Education, giving rise to multiplication of coaching institutes and private tuitions.

19 Here I must refer to the Neighborhood School Plan as recommended by the Commission. The Commission recommended it only for primary education and not secondary education and did not elaborate as in the case of the common school plan. The Commission does not appear to be serious about neighborhood school as about the common school. Perhaps the Commission felt that the idea was too revolutionary as not be acceptable to the government. The Commission's fears were justified.

Even though the Parliamentary Committee constituted by the Government to draft an Educational Policy did retain the recommendation regarding the Neighborhood School Plan, the resolution on National Policy on Education (1968) dropped the idea altogether.

20 The Neighbourhood School Plan has in brief the following ingredients

- 1 Each child in the well-defined neighborhood of the (Primary or secondary) should (not must) attend the school,
2. People living in the Education Area must pay a substantial part of the expenditure on education of the Educational area through an equitable and progressive tax to be collected by the Government and passed onto the Area Council;
3. The Educational Area should be small enough for direct involvement of every family in the area. Total decision making must be entrusted to a broad based council constituted from among the people of the area, not by election as in Panchayats by common consent.
- 4 One or two high schools, three to six middle schools and 10 to 15 primary schools should be clubbed together to form the School Complex and the area of the Complex should be defined. This area may be known as Education Area or Educational Block.
- 5 The Government should pay grant to each Education Area Council on the basis of the number of children in the schools in the Education Area and the economic

status of the Area. Prosperous areas may be given less grants than the poorer ones.

- 6 Even if some parents send their children to a school which is not a part of the system (Complex) or they have no children at all, still they have to pay the contribution for the upkeep of the schools in the Area.
- 7 When it comes to decision making for one's own children every one takes the decision that one thinks best
- 8 It need hardly be said that education shall be free in such an Educational Area.
- 9 Exclusive schools and schools run by the minorities may be kept outside the system unless they themselves want to be part of the system;
- 10 Judiciously managed, the Neighborhood School Plan will be less expensive to the Government as a part of the cost shall be contributed by the people living in Area. The savings of the Government could be spent on academic improvement and research.
- 11 This Plan will be more satisfying to the people as they will have the tune even if they pay only a part of the cost
21. The rationale behind the provision contained in para 20(6) is that if an uneducated person turns into a criminal, he may harm both, persons with school going children and the persons with no children.
22. It is a queer fact educational history that, whereas the Founding Fathers of the India Nation entrusted the destiny of the Nation to the vote of the LAST MAN, Education Commission in their august wisdom recommended the creation of such a web of administration and system which has given rise to large scale corruption, inefficiency and distortion in the society. No wonder, those discerning individuals, who knew they could not change the worthless system and had the wherewithal, fled from it and sought a haven in a system which they felt could prepare their children to meet the obligations of life.
23. In such a system, the role of the Government could be limited to
 1. Providing academic guidance to the system.
 2. Providing training and refresher courses to the teachers.
 3. Promoting establishment of schools in backward areas and constituting the School Area Council
 4. Coordinating the sharing of experiences and expertise among the various school area units
 5. Determine grants and its payment to the School Area Council.

6. Auditing of accounts of the Educational Area Councils

7. Provide other services to the system that the state deems necessary

24. Under the Neighborhood School Plan, the pay and perks of the teachers and other workers will be determined by the local conditions but within the parameters set by the state policy on such matters. Naturally very efficient teachers will command far better emoluments than the ordinary ones. The teachers will be eager to enhance their quality in order to increase their bargaining capacity. In such a dynamic system good and renowned teachers will be a sought after commodity.

25. In such a system, parents' right to choose the kind of education that should be given to their children as contained in Article 26(3) of the Declaration of Human Rights will be safeguarded.

26. There shall be no infringement of the rights of minorities to establish and manage the institutions of their choice. Academic co-operation will be possible and welcome.

27. Had the Commission seriously recommended the NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOL PLAN and Government had included in the National Education Policy, the Nation consisting of organic units in the form of competing Educational Area could have had an efficient public educational system as did the Miniscule minorities under Article 30 of the Constitution of India.

28. The recommendations of the Education Commission as regards school education are utterly unworkable and the earlier they are forgotten, the better for the society.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM GROUND SITUATION AND THE VALIDITY OF THE CONCEPT

**S.N. PANDEY
DEEPAK JAIN**

Introduction

A large number of academics and policy planners in the country have often espoused concern and commitment for emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society. They have looked upon common school system of public education as a solution. The NCERT has invited papers and is scheduled to hold a national seminar. In this backdrop, this paper intends to examine the validity and relevance of the concept in the context of the ground situation.

The concept, guiding premises and relevance

The concept of Common School System owes its origin to the report of the Education Commission headed by Prof. D.S. Kothari. In authoring the concept, the Commission heavily depended on a number of premises. One of the critical premise was that common school system could alone make the educational system a *powerful instrument of national development in general and social and national integration in particular*. The Commission espoused the concept in order to promote the much adored goal of emergence of egalitarian and integrated society.

The Commission derived inspirations from what they could perceive from the experiments in the then U.S.S.R. The Commission could find justifications from whatever was common to it in the educational system in U.S.A., France and the Scandinavian countries. Nonetheless, in advocating the cause for common school system, the Commission turned simplistic and assumed that difference and divergence in the management structure as private and public schools brought about cleavage and went against the emergence of a cohesive social order.

The 1968 resolution on National Policy on Education as much as the 1986 National Policy on Education endorsed the concept using different words of common denomination without either dwelling on solid research based evidence or critical overview and assessment of our ground realities

The proposition of common school system for the avowed goal of cohesive social order can seldom be realised just by bringing about a change in the management system as such. It is much of a function of quality of teaching learning process and teaching learning inputs.

The premise of the Commission about the education system as the powerful instrument of national development and national integration can certainly not be faulted. Similarly, there is little to dispute about the need for an egalitarian society. However, it is hard to imagine that human mind and human desires could be controlled and regimented just through a system of common roof in the schools.

It is a long felt necessity that the partnership between the Govt and the non-governmental organisations much less people at large do perhaps have the potential to tackle the problem of universal access to the cohorts in the schools and university systems. The problem awaits solutions even as the private and the public schools management co-exists in the country. Going by the scenario at hand, it shall perhaps remain unanswered in the next few years even when the promised six percent of the GDP is made available in the budget for the education sector. Shall it be then advisable to bank just on government schools?

In the existing education system, the government schools still account for the bulk of enrolment. It is again only the government schools which account for much of the drop outs. It is also not a secret that the competency level of students in govt. schools are much below the desired level in comparison to the private schools. Experiments in certain states in nationalising the schools go to testify the fact that absence of competition stand against competitiveness in the achievements.

Demographic transition of the current genera has endowed India with a substantially large young school going age population. The first and foremost requirement is to

make schooling available at the door steps in every nook and corner of the country. The second and equally important necessity is to provide quality education to all of them while not compromising the socio-cultural ethos of various shreds of populace. Keeping social cohesiveness and national unity as the basic agenda of our nation building efforts against the forces of segregation and alienation, it is but a natural imperative that we look for a scenario where teaching learning transactions acquire a quality worth its name.

Needed steps

In professing the need for a common school system, the Education Commission had delved deep on extending the out reach of education where average parents could afford to send their ward and that good education depended not on wealth or class but on talent of the pupils. In fact, through an array of school system and sub-system, the outreach of the programme has been expanding gradually. Adult education, Non-Formal Educational Programme and host of other special educational components are beginning to make their dent on solving the problem of mass illiteracy and promoting universalisation primary education. Problems notwithstanding await solution only in respect of quality of education. This is perhaps at the root responsible for large scale drop out and inefficiency. The deduction can be tested and validated from simple straight comparison and contrast of the education outcome privately managed and govt. schools.

There is change in the economic and social scenario in the country in the last 50 years. Many who could pay should be made to pay. There is no good in imposing legal sanction. In the interest of bringing about element of competitiveness in the education system, it is but essential that the public and private managed schools function simultaneously. What is direly needed that we go to create a system whereby the private schools do not just hold esteem by its name and the govt. managed school evoke indifference. Better trained teachers, better organisation of transactions in the teaching learning process, interesting and creative learning materials and over and above, lively, interactive and responsive system of school management and control can perhaps answer the problem.

The concept of common school systems thus needs to be understood and given a shape not through an archaic system of demolishing and replacing the existing system but through an innovative, supplanting and complementing process of teaching-learning transaction. It is quite different that this exercise too shall need a political will and academic and administrative rigour. Accountability shall be again the heart and soul.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

Shyam Sunder Shrimali

-The Mudalier (Dr A L Mudalier) All India Secondary Education Commission, 1953, recommended a common pattern 10+2+4 supporting the suggestion of the University Education Commission, 1949, headed by Dr Radhakrishnan

-The All India Education Commission, 1964-66, headed by Dr D.S Kothan, expressed concern for the prevailing system of education which it found to be "largely unrelated to life, needs and aspirations of the people", and, strongly recommended for "common opportunities for education" to all

-The Gajendra Gadker sub-committee of the National Integration Council, 1968, recommended, "Education from the Primary to Post-Graduate stage should be reoriented to

- a) serve the purpose of creating a sense of Indianness, unity and solidarity,
- b) inculcate faith in the postulate of democracy, and
- c) help the nation to create a modern society out of the present traditional one "

-In the publication of the Human Development Ministry, 1986, titled as "National Policy on Education - 1986" there is a separate part (Part IV) - ***"Education for Equality"***, which underlines the need for a Common School System for equality ***"The new policy will lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far."***

Thus all the National Education Commissions organised with a reference to the School Education, have expressed concern regarding the disparities that are there in the school system itself. It has posed a serious problem by creating classes which cannot work together as they cannot feel their good to be common, rather the so called ELITE class can fulfil its aspirations only through exploiting the class of people who they look down upon as the common masses. Such a division of society is responsible for the disintegration of our Nation, and is something undemocratic. Democracy demands

an egalitarian society, characterised by liberty, equality and fraternity. At least equal opportunities should be made available to all including even the weakest sector of our society, the sector and sections of our people that have been considered in PART IV of the HRD publication of 1986 titled as *“National Policy of Education - 1986”*. Since then efforts have been made, and, are continuing to support the weaker sections to enable them to get the education of quality - the establishment of Navodaya Vidyalayas, is a major step in the direction. Even then far from reaching anywhere near the target, we are looming away from it with the mushrooming of so called PUBLIC SCHOOLS charging exorbitantly high fees from the parents with the plea of providing special education, and, uncommon facilities - twenty five percent hike in school fees in one stretch made the parents raise their voice high against it last year; the parents' association even knocked at the court against it.

Are parents not free to withdraw their wards from such schools if they feel that the fees charged by them is not justified from any angle of consideration? No, they can't do that. One, the government schools have, in general, virtually grown non-functional, second, to send children to very high-charging schools, has become a symbol of social status, and, so a point of prestige. These so called public schools are exploiting both these factors in earning huge sum of money. The main characteristics of these schools are such which are splitting the society with a feeling of alienation in one section against the other, the characteristics are as under:

- i The medium of instruction is English which helps in creating a section of our society suffering with the illusion of superiority over the rest.
- ii The books are of higher standard, i.e., both the language and the contents are much more difficult - in some cases so difficult that a tension is created not only for the students but for their parents or guardians as well. A commercial thinking in many cases is also working there, a number of educational publications have come up flourishing by way of floating high commissions.
- iii Interviews and tests have further complicated the situation. For an admission into a nursery class, to a kid of hardly three, it is essential to prepare for an interview, interview not only for the kid but for his father and mother both. For admission to a class higher than this, there is, generally, a system of putting the candidate to test to see whether the candidate is eligible for admission to such a prestigious institution or not. Through this modality of admission the institution also intends to make the impression that it's not an ordinary institution but a very special institution, to get

admission there should be considered a big achievement and this helps them in making high charges as fees or sometimes as capitation fees with some other names

- iv. The article 30 of our constitution has rightly confirmed upon the right to establish and administer their own/special educational institutions, and, exemption from income-tax to educational institutions, is also justified, but vested-interests exploit good things for their individual benefits or for achieving monetary ends through unscrupulous means. A good number of private schools are not better than educational shops, making huge profits through all means. There are well established institutions, also maintaining a high educational standard, even then they are also responsible for further causing segregation in our society
- v. These so called special public schools do not serve the cause of education of the gifted children which they can if they so intend. But what actually they are doing is to serve the cause of education for the moneyed-class who can afford to pay high fees even for their mediocre children. On the other hand gifted children of the poor families cannot get education be fitting to their talents. Thus, these schools indirectly help mediocrity to have an upperhand over meritocracy
- vi. These schools have greatly helped in developing an elite mentality. In our society there is a class which considers itself superior to the rest of crores of people, they always try to keep themselves at an arm's length from the class of these common people. The result is that those belonging to the former section are insensitive to the problems and difficulties of the latter class, those of the former have no interest in any way in the people of the latter class - this is a major cause of disparity in our society, the mentality of elitism is a hinderance in achieving national integration.

Those belonging to the so called elite class, holding key posts in administration, and in other set-ups as they are, generally, indulge in exploiting the socio-economic backwardness of the common people for their personal benefit

Measures Which May Effect the Desired Change

The desired target is the development of an egalitarian society, a democratic society where everyone can have the opportunity to develop oneself to the full that one has got potentiality for. The common system of education is the main means to achieve it. All the main national commissions of education have recommended for a common

system of education, and, have expressed great concern for its absence at present. But in spite of all our efforts we have failed to develop a common system of education, the special public schools are rather increasing disparity in education. Some measures are being suggested here, which may effect the desired change

- 1) There must be at least a part of curriculum common in all the schools of the country, this has been termed as "*Core Curriculum*" in the NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION - 1986. The booklet (i.e., National Policy on Education, 1986) lays down. "*The common core will include the history of India's Freedom Movement, the constitutional obligations and other contents essential to nurture national identity*" These elements are to be included with the objective of "promoting values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of the sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers, observance of the small family norms and inculcation of the scientific temper" It has also laid down that our education must strengthen India's hoary tradition of treating the whole world as one family" (VASUDHEV KUTUMBKAM); to which should be linked our principle of "international co-operation and peaceful co-existence" To remove "prejudices and complexes transmitted through the social environment and the accident of birth"; the curriculum should teach the "inherent equality" through the core curriculum Steps should also be taken to foster understanding of the diverse cultural and social systems of the people living in different parts of the country One more important objective of the core curriculum should be to encourage the young to "undertake the rediscovery of India" There must be fixed a minimum level of learning in respect to each subject It must be obligatory for each private and government school to achieve that level The schools which are meant for the gifted children, they may be permitted to enrich their curriculum by introducing supplementary readers or books with some new and more difficult items of learning - otherwise the contents and their levels must be the same through out the country in all subjects. Of course, the specialities pertaining to local physical and social environments may be taught in addition to the core curriculum; they would form the secondary curriculum
- 2) Medium of instruction is also an important factor which hinders our achieving the target of Common School System The three language formula is the only well

thought-out solution to the problem, but it's sincere and strict implementation has never been made with a view for introducing a common school system

At present, generally, in the common government schools, English is introduced at standard sixth; but looking to the craze of the people, in general, for English-though not founded on proper reasoning, English may be introduced at the third standard instead

Now, there may be a few families who have the genuine need of English medium to be introduced at the very beginning; to cater their needs, one private and one government school for a population of 5 lac people, would suffice

Steps should be taken to awaken the common people to the reality that getting the entire education from Nursery to the Higher through the medium of English, is not the genuine need of most of us; to compel our children to have their education through it, is neither psychologically sound, nor is otherwise beneficial to the person or the society; nor are there available competent teachers in most of the so called English medium schools, who can do justice with the medium

- 3) Interviews or tests for admission to Nursery or kindergarten classes have been made a cognizable offence in Maharashtra, it's a step worth-following by other states too. For admission to other higher classes the certificate issued by a recognized or government school should be an acceptable basis. In case there is much pressure of admission in a school because of its reputation, selection of students may be made on the basis of marks secured in the last examination, or, some summary test may be held
- 4) In the U S A , a guardian has to admit his ward only in a school situated in the locality of his house he is not free to get him admitted in any school of his choice only because he can afford high fees and other expenses. This is an effective check on the business-like competition which the institutions, mainly established with the motive of earning money, and which are also mainly responsible for causing disparity in school system, have started. Only in very rare cases on some genuine ground, permission may be accorded to have an admission in a school outside the locality. We in India should also follow the suit
- 5) The Pace-setting schools, as envisaged in the National Policy on Education - 1986 (5.14 & 5.15) can go a long way in removing disparity in the system of education as prevailing at present. It is good that the central government has done much towards the fulfilment of its resolve to open one Navodaya Vidyalaya in each district where

"good quality education" is available to talented children largely rural, from the different parts of the country, "irrespective of their capacity to pay for it" At the end of para 5 15 is given "The schools will be. . . . free of charge."

- 6) An important measure to bring about commonness in the system can be a common examination. If students of all the schools, both private and government, ordinary and special, are linked to a common system of examination for which contents of subjects, and modalities of examining, are common - it will ensure a common academic educational standard for all the students, irrespective of the nature of schools they are studying in, and the resources that are available there. Some schools may be permitted to administer, in addition, some tests special in nature looking to the need of the same for the students who are talented, or are to be prepared for some special needs of the society. Thus there may be some special examination papers or practical examinations related to the special/enriched curriculum.

In some states there is a system of common examination at the district level. In some districts/states there is an arrangement of Board like examination for the Fifth and the Eighth classes. Such an arrangement is to ensure that at least a minimum common level of learning is achieved in all the different school subjects by the students of schools so different in their management, resources and aspirations.

To sum up, it would be in the fitness of things to remark that commonness of School System should never mean to attempt to thwart the pace of progress of those who are talented or gifted, or to neglect the needs of the society which are so multifarious in nature and extent. The society demands individuals prepared to meet its needs which range from very simple to the most complicated for which man power of higher intelligence, and especially educated and trained, is required, hence enriched curriculum will have to be provided in view of the needs of specialities in different fields; and, additional papers or tests will have to be arranged accordingly.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

Soumitra Mallik

Introduction

Education is the most potential wealth of a nation. The long-term cumulative rise or fall of a nation can primarily be attributed to its level of mass education. India, with her large population has an unfathomable possibility of advancement with a uniform education policy and true implementation of the same. For a large democracy as ours, education can become the strongest cohesive force, vis-a-vis the multifarious diversities in terms of language, religion, social and financial stratification existing in the society at large. To enable education play its much coveted role of social binder, it must be given the place of prime importance in the social realm of India. The CSS is the first significant step towards achieving this goal for education.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The problems that plague the Indian education system today have their roots deep seated in the past. The tyrannical behavioural patterns of the British Raj and the obvious colonization of the entire social structure and function, in India have ruined the possibility of CSS concept. Education for the royalities, nobilities and elites was imperative during the British regime to suit their material and colonial needs. The western education system that was brought to India to create generations of 'Babu' to serve the British colonists soon turned into the highly regarded elite education system of India. Schools were established in chosen hill stations and elsewhere to breed a mixed group of Babu along with a handful of colonial imperialists.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Today, this tradition is meaningfully maintained by the so called 'public schools' often under a religious or racial denomination. These are the schools where India's financially upper crust get their education and turn into native imperialists and rule social supremacy over the millions of Indians.

Over the last fifty years, these educational institutions, in the name of 'quality education', have been instilling in the young minds, the intrinsic superiority of their birth, finance and thus of an overall social status, in the country. These schools, 'of the rich for the rich and by the rich' have been creating a genre of highest social order. The excruciating contrast to these schools lies in the rest of India where one encounters school-under a tree (no building), without drinking water; fields for toilets, donated old torn books as the texts for a new year and ugly governance of politics in the matters of appointment of all functionaries of the school. The two sets of schools continue to function in their respective orders. The former keeps on producing a snobbish clan of people of high financial power with the least concern for the country and very much adapted to the offals of a foreign trend (not culture) whereas the latter keeps on struggling for its very existence and produces a series of middle class to down trodden citizens - only barely prepared to face the oppression of the upper stratum and ever busy in defining their being.

PROBLEMS IN TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO

The problem of parallel education system have, in brief, the following reasons

a) social classification

- financial stratification
- caste-based stratification
- creed and mores-based stratification

b) Linguistic differences

c) Religious fanaticism - education imparted by the religious minorities does not help transcend social barriers,

d) urban and rural set up

- in terms of geographical and historical perspective
- in terms of financial resources and infrastructural handicaps.

Thus education, being a universal concept, in the perspective of a country, can not have a single parameter problem solving method.

AN APPROACH TOWARD THE SOLUTION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CSS.

The parameters enumerated above and the ones not mentioned, make education a plethora of interwoven processes that are quite difficult to be isolatedly treated. So it is rather difficult and complex to make a significant headway into the solution unless it begins at the highest level of democracy i.e. at the Parliament.

- a) It is necessary to make provision in the Indian Constitution for 'equal education for all' (and not just 'education for all').
- b) Complete obliteration of private schools in a phased manner - strictly over a stipulated period of time. Facing legalities for such obliteration, the high handedness of the private schools must be crushed bringing them under the direct supervision of the government official, suited to the cause e.g., Principals of private schools could be only govt. Employees
- c) Introduction of a language formula that will be rationally applicable to all schools in the country. The question of the language formula will have to be most critically and judiciously considered
- d) Religious education should be completely substituted by moral education, following the guidelines of NCSE (fig.1), in every school in the country. Religious and creed-based practices will not be denounced but could be encouraged to be practised extramural.
- e) The teacher education should maintain a high standard throughout the country, following the guidelines of NCTE.
- f) Regular short-term mobilization of teachers from one school to another could be arranged (in the form of exchange programs)
- g) Potential-appraisal (not performance analysis) of teachers should be maintained on a yearly basis by all the schools. This would yield better result if it is made incentive-linked (in financial and promotional terms).
- h) Every school in the country will have to obey the curricula and syllabi prescribed by the NCSE in its GPANE (fig. 2) on a time-bound frame.

- i) If the CSS is a result of egalitarian excogitation, then the fees to be paid in these schools will have to be considered from that viewpoint. A scheme needs to be worked out to this end where a peasant and an industrialist both can afford to pay the fees for his ward with some what equal ease.
- j) Infrastructural expenses of the CSS may be borne by the central and state governments as well as by the private sector entrepreneurs.

We may have been late by 50 years in introducing the CSS but considering the fact that India will live to be an ideal for the rest of the world for hundreds of years to come, it is never too late to have a comprehensive universal education system that would foster the true Indian spiritual and cultural ethos.

The successful implementation of common school system will be the first significant realization of the statement "The future of India lies in her classrooms"

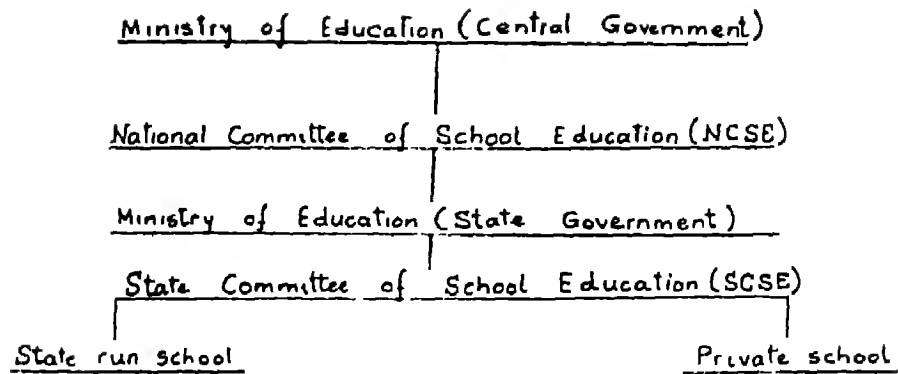


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Control

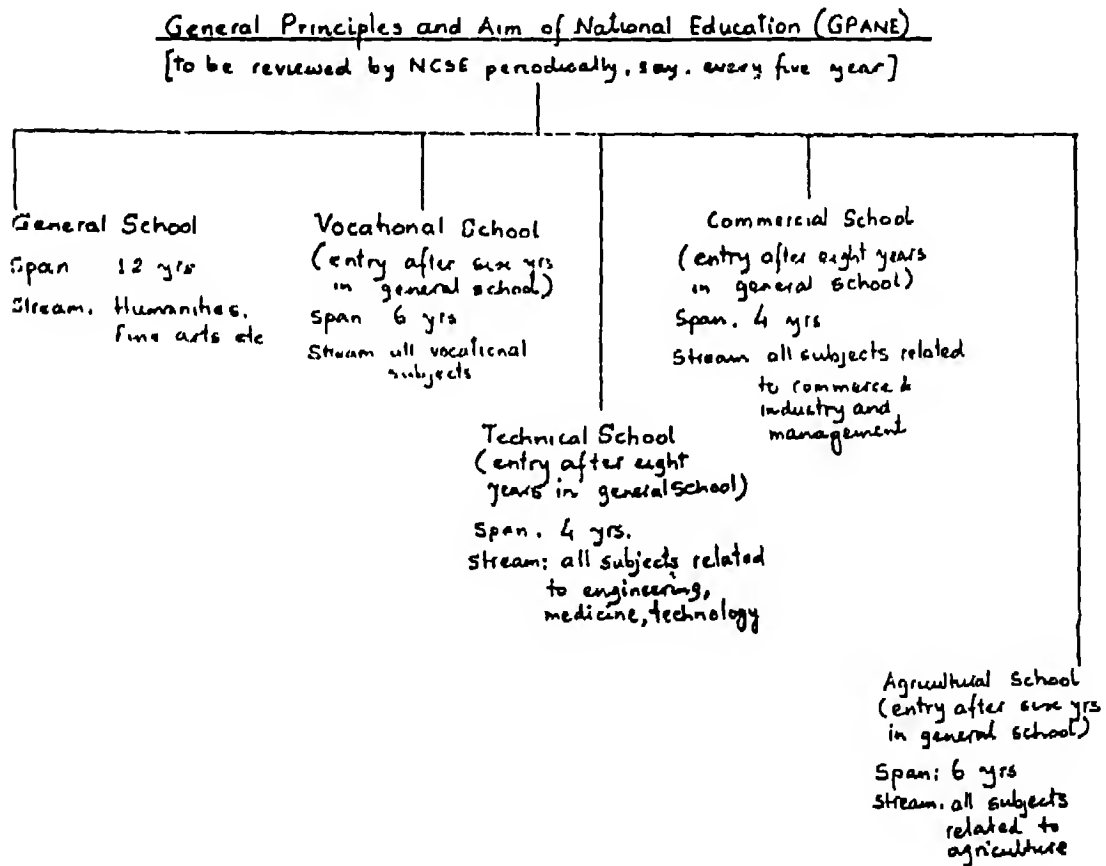


FIGURE 2: The Curricula and Types of Schools in CSS

Sumita Mallik

AN APPROACH TO COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

S.S.GILL AND T.K. GILL

Education, fundamental to all-round development of the individual, refines one's sensitivities, perceptions and abilities that contribute to social cohesion and national integration. Each nation develops its system of education to promote its unique socio-cultural identity as well as challenges of times. India has a very diverse culture involving different social classes and different religions with a large number of regional variations. To bring the different groups together so as to promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society, Education Commission (1964-66) introduced the concept of Common School System stressing the following aspects

- > It will be open to all children irrespective of social, economic and other differences
- ⇒ Access to education will depend on talent
- ⇒ Adequate standards would be maintained.
- ⇒ No tuition fee would be charged

The average parent would not ordinarily feel the need of sending his children to expensive schools outside the system

Commission further stated that Common School System should be such that educational system becomes a powerful instrument of national development in general, social and national integration in particular. NPE, 1968 accepted the idea of commission, whereas NPE 1986 stated that effective measures will be taken in the direction of Common School System recommended in the 1968 Policy. The implications of having the Common School System has been stated by the NPE, 1986 to be gaining of access to education of a comparable quality by all students irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex (Review Committee, 1990)

Common School System is prevalent in USSR, the USA and certain European countries in some form or the other (Review Committee, 1990). But in

our country instead of going nearer to the goal even after 3 decades of perceiving the idea, we have drifted away from it

Present situation of School Education

The present situation of school education in the country is very disheartening. Two distinct classes of schools have been created. One is superior type schools who provide good education to the upper strata of the society due to their paying capacity and social status. Other type is meant for the poor and rural people who can not afford to go to the superior schools. The level of education provided by the existing categories of schools viz., government schools, private schools and special purpose schools varies from one extreme to the other, thereby widening the gap between different social groups.

Government Schools

Most of the government schools especially in poor community and rural areas have poor infrastructure and poor quality of education. Teachers get good salary as compared to their counterparts in private schools. The poor quality of education in these schools can be attributed to following factors

- ⇒ Schools in the remote areas are usually understaffed whereas in the cities, schools are overstaffed and are backed by politicians. Gap between the rural and urban education has increased.
- ⇒ There is stagnation in field of promotion. Merit is rarely rewarded on the basis of work, thereby teachers have no zeal for their professional work.
- ⇒ Due to oversecurity to staff, the atmosphere of complacency prevails among them, which is a common attribute of the public sector.
- ⇒ On account of same cadre, teacher can be appointed and transferred anywhere, they are less involved in community and do not develop the sense of loyalty to the institution.
- ⇒ Rules and regulations impose too much restrictions and minimum academic freedom is granted which is contrary to the demands of profession of teaching.
- ⇒ Medium of instructions is regional language or mother tongue. But most of the parents like to send their children to English medium schools. Only those

children enter the government schools who have no access to English medium status schools. Creme of society goes to other schools

Private Schools

Private schools form an integral part of the system of public education and can be classified as .

- ⇒ Recognized and aided schools
- ⇒ Recognized and unaided schools
- ⇒ Unrecognized schools

Some of the privately managed schools are very efficient institutions. These attract competent and dedicated teachers who get good salary and form self-perpetuating body of their own. These schools charge high capitation as well as tuition fee. But a majority of privately managed schools, which can be named as educational 'shops' have negative contribution to the educational system and have following limitations

- ⇒ Service conditions are poor with little or no security of tenure
- ⇒ Remuneration is less and management committees exploit the teachers by showing more pay on records and paying less in actual. Teachers with poor educational background are employed
- ⇒ Work load of teachers is more as pupil teacher ratio is very high.
- ⇒ Management committees and voluntary organisation dominated by sectarian considerations affect the recruitment and service conditions of staff as well as general atmosphere of the institution

Despite above limitations, teachers of privately managed schools work hard and are closely associated with community than their counterparts in government schools. Medium of instructions i.e. English lures the good students

Special Purpose Schools

There are some special schools in the country such as Sainik Schools, Public Schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas etc. These schools provide good quality education but are not meant for public education in general as they have some special purpose.

New types of schools introduced in the period of one political government are neglected by the other party when it comes into power. Adarsh schools and Dashmesh Academy Anandpur Sahib are the examples of such schools in Punjab.

Measures to introduce Common School System

We have completed 50 years of independence, but our educational system has become dismal than ever before. Instead of social cohesion and national integration, a division has been marked in the social strata. If we look into the past, we can observe that people who won top positions in society, have gone through the same system of education as the common man. To enforce Common School System following steps should be taken:

- ⇒ All stages of education and all schools except some special purpose schools should remain within the system. Through motivation and legislation efficiently run private schools can be included into the system.
- ⇒ Role of local bodies, private and voluntary organizations should be integrated with state governments.
- ⇒ There should be one statutory body at the center as NCERT. The whole planning should be done by that body. States should adopt the same in accordance with local/regional conditions like language, culture, timings with equal number of working days etc. District level administrative machinery should be efficient enough to check the level of education and implementation of policies etc.
- ⇒ Disparity in the existing categories of schools should be minimized in following aspects:
 - a) **Recognition** : All schools having requisite standards should be recognized. Unrecognized schools and the so called educational 'shops' should have no place in the educational system. Public should be made aware of this.
 - b) **Aid** : All schools should be aided by the government so as to provide equal educational opportunities, to all, irrespective of caste and creed. Special funds should be allocated to schools in rural, remote, backward and slum areas. School fund should be created out of donation from community, voluntary organizations or any income raised by school authorities and matching grant should be provided by the government.

- c) **Tuition Fee:** Equal tuition fee should be charged in all schools. Capitation fee for admission should be totally abolished.
- d) **Curriculum:** All schools should have a uniform pattern of curriculum having scope for regional variations. At the primary level, the students should have mastery in arithmetic and mother tongue. Information about science, environment or culture should be included in the text books of mother-tongue. Text-books should be prepared at the national level and translated into regional languages. National language should be introduced at 4th standard whereas English as language should be introduced at 6th standard.
- e) **Medium of Instructions :** At the elementary level, medium of instructions should be the regional language. But from 9th class onwards, science and mathematics should be taught in English medium, while for other subjects, there should be option for medium. Most of the parents do not like to send their children to those schools, which do not have English as medium of instructions. Policy makers or the politicians, themselves send their own children to English medium schools, but the latter exploit the feelings of people not to study foreign or any other language except mother tongue just to get votes. They do not want the public to come out of the barriers of religion and language. Learning more languages promotes mobility, interaction and national cohesion.
- f) **Affiliation to examining bodies:** All schools in one state except the central schools should be affiliated to State Education Boards only. Presently government schools are affiliated to State Education Boards, whereas efficiently run private schools are affiliated to CBSE or ICSE and parents prefer latter.
- g) **Recruitment and service conditions of teachers :** There should be a uniform pattern of recruitment and service conditions of teachers. Teachers working in remote, backward, rural and slum areas should have considerable amount of extra benefits and these should continue till they show good performance.

The Common School System can not be enforced overnight. Implementation in phases with the help of legislation and local bodies can be of help. But until or unless the policies are not implemented strictly without any political interference, target will be out of reach. 3 - language formula is one of the policies which could not be implemented in South, due to politicians own interest

Only a firm 'will' to implement the policies will help to attain the goal of Common School System

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COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

T.D. SOYANTAR

We are dealing with the concept of education in the specific situation in the Indian Republic, which in the formal legal language, employed the Constitution makers, is constituted into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC to ensure to all its citizens JUSTICE, SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIBERTY OF THOUGHT, EXPRESSION, BELIEF, FAITH ETC. EQUALITY OF STATUS AND OF OPPORTUNITY ; and to promote among them all

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the NATION.

All the above concepts and the premises of the PREAMBLE of the Constitution of India should mark a break with the past India was a never nation state before Now it is constituted as a nation state by the statue of its foundation. It is a juridical concept, which has to be built into a palpable living reality over time Yet it will be wrong to ignore the history of the various regions and native states and the past empires, which arose on the socio-political terrain of the geographic entity of India

Before society emerged into history, it was preceded by various tribal and pretribal human formations in the sub-continent of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh Food gathering, hunting, and domestication animals either at the matrarchal stage or the later patrarchal stage are landmarks of human history and pre-history The underlying truth that bound the tribal and clan formation was the biological given of the human body, that it is necessary for the humans to labour for food Till the emergence of the State in its modern sense in Magadha and Kosal-region in the Ganga plains, the society was knit together by the kinship bounds That is, for most of the human existence the humankind has emerged and lived as brotherhood-sisterhood, claiming the bond based on the mother right first and on the overthrow of that society by the patrarchal order after the domestication of animals and the beginning of plough agriculture in place of the women's hoe agriculture But the patrarchal tribes lived by collective labour for production of food and their property was the clan/tribe property as was the sharing and caring a collective responsibility It was when the varna/caste society based on the permanent settlement of villages began on the emergence of the absolutist monarchical state like Magadha and Kosal that detribalisation started and with it the fraternal/sisternal bond became a memory, though in the popular culture it has persisted as an ideal But the social, political and economic reality of the caste/tribe society organised on the principle of extraction of the surplus by the priest-military oligarchy which destroyed the tribal janapadas and the autochthonous tribal formations in around the Indus valley first and later in the Yamuna-Ganga plains for all practical purpose buried it It is now for the first time that a formal founding document claims to constitute the modern Indian state carved out from the British Indian empire to promote FRATERNITY among all All the caste and tribe biradanes do not make India a fraternity. This has to be achieved in a modern democratic republican state and not in a medieval, or ascient social formation tout the ancient ideals of unity and brotherhood/sisterhood to delude us and the masses

NATION building is a task of the displaced and deprived masses and therefore the subject of education should be approached from the mass angle and reality, because besides the fraternity India has to become a socialist and secular state of the assurances of the Constitution-makers. But the ideals themselves should be embodiment of the aspirations of the masses

The nationalist elite before the first world war were bogged down into the expansion of the general schools and could not make an issue of the mass education. We note that during the inter war years there was debate about the expansion of education, its content and quality following the attempt of Gopal Krishna Gokhale's in raising the issue of elementary education in the Central Legislature. But, India consists of different and conflicting regional and caste/class groups with unequal levels of development or lack of compounded by the working of historic forces of appropriation of the resources of the people by the successive state formation as alliances of the ruling oligarchies and invasions of foreigners attracted by accumulation of wealth at the top. The polity and society that had emerged and persisted in permanently divided, and the village society of the hereditary castes bound by the chains of birth and karma, moksha determined culture had left the masses at a less than subsistence level by the rampant exploitation operating within the system

Colonialist state benefited its agents and the newly created class of land tax collectors and administrative class pressed into the service of the colonial masters, who in turn propagated and practise myth of the superiority of the liberal state, which granted power and freedom to bind the individuals in unequal contracts of debt, usure, sale of land made transferable under the British law, but unknown so far, it perpetuated the idiocy and misery of the toiling classes, castes and the tribes across the country. National unity was an ideal pursued within a system designed to appropriate the resources of the people by the market forces and economy under the contracts enforceable under the Anglo Saxon laws. Pursuit of private profit and furtherance of class interest cannot and has not allowed the emergence of universal education of the masses especially when the colonial state broke up the traditional mutual obligation of the village community, which itself was founded on an earlier dispossessory foundation, but yet had some tribal survivals, whereby the produce of the village was shared in proportion of the labour and services provided by the respective castes, after payment of the share of the state or zamindar. But the British law granted right over the land only to a formal/nominal holder made responsible for payment of land tax now collected in cash through a new set of directly appointed hereditary/permanent or stipendary functionaries. The excluded castes were the permanent landless denied credit by the moneylender or food by the landholder except by wage payment, which shrank as number seeking employment rose with the breakdown of handicraft and village industries destroyed by the imports from abroad. The elite mindset ignored all these changes except in their own case, where they further entrenched in the higher education by selection. A social and educational Darwinism has marked the post-colonial phase, though paying lip service to the ideal of universalisation of education at the primary level

The directive principle of free and compulsory education for all upto 14 years of age, was therefore an advance over the colonial education for the few. But even the 50 years spread that was envisaged by Seerger Committee (1944) as a post war educational reform and the 15 year limit of the Constitution makers and the Kothari Commission (1964-65) time frame of fifteen years has long been over and yet we are nowhere near the universalisation of education for the modest target of upto 14 year age. reasons as outlined above are historic 1 and perpetuated by the individual-

approach and profit oriented liberal democratic state based on the false notion of governance by a mythical "social contract whereby the state is made to rule over the citizens, who in reality are denied the basic goods and services necessary for human existence. Colonialism not only dealt a body blow to the traditional order, but further fragmented, pluralised the already caste/class religiously, ethnically divided societies by the duality of the economic development by opting out the elite of the Indian through the use of English for its administration, trade commerce and business by opening schools for those elite to learn English. The whole history of education in India after the establishment of East India Company and the revival of the Sanskrit and Persian learning under the orientalist like William Jones and the Royal Asiatic Society lent a false glory to the ancient past of India to reassert the primacy of Sanskritised learning by the elite in India. The phenomenon took the mass languages away from the elite, who were the beneficiaries of the Company Government. The British themselves opened schools for the Zamindars progeny to Anglicise them. Those institutions and many more survive and flourish in free India, to thwart any attempt at the common system being realised.

However, now the Constitution of India enjoins fraternity as mandate and that human society has a beginning and a much longer Kinship history and prehistory and that it was also the ideal of the socialism in modern times, we cannot avoid the question of the social desirability or otherwise of the common school. We have to consider whether the absence of the common neighbourhood school has also acted as barrier to the universalisation of the elementary/high school education in India and has resulted in the practice of two nation theory of social classes.

We have noted that the language teaching has been dominated by the classical languages and that education has been running the course of elitist school system in the guise of the parents right to select school for their child. The quality of the public-run/government run schools and equipment has been allowed by the public policy to deteriorate, not to improve in spite of many innovations and curricula reforms attempted from time to time.

Where the village has no option, but to send its children to the common village school, the untouchable child is made to sit at distance in the same class, or the untouchable children form a separate row. The teacher insults their language and the mores. Midday meal scheme for all children was scrapped in Gujarat by the upper/caste dominated Janta Dal, B J P government in 1990, because it was only the low caste/untouchable Adiwasi children would eat, whereas the uppercaste children would stay away. The slums hardly have schools, if at all they are at distance for the child to walk. It is similar situation in the ghettos of the so called low castes and the minorities at the lower end of the society. Language and culture propagated in the elitist schools is foreign to the mass of the deprived children. Untouchability has acted as barrier and is still practised in many crude and subtle ways. The two nation theory is not a figment of imagination. But the demands of the modern days to which the elite has responded with a lacuna in opening up for them their special and private schools is creating an unbridgeable divide of skills and technology suitable for the market place dominated by them. Token reservations are a carrot to the advanced sections of the deprived castes to silence them. Unfortunately the Education Commission (1964-65), though aware of the problem, rest satisfied by a ceremonial mention of the common school system, because it also at the same time advocate a special school for the talented child. It envisaged the high school education as demand oriented and not as need oriented because it failed to overcome the class bias to realise that the world has travelled long after the Constitution mandated free and compulsory education in 1950. No worthwhile

nation has considered primary school as the terminal stage. Indians of elite world never tire of boasting the uniqueness of their 'civilisation, yet never think or act in terms of the organic unity of their social groups with the dispossessed of the country.

Why is the common school necessary, when the parents can afford to send their children to an expensive school? How come they can afford an expensive and exclusive school, when there is a population larger than the population of India in 1947 which is still illiterate and the effective literacy above the 8th standard is yet a fraction of the 53% literacy recorded in 1991? It is the two nation theory in practice that permits all that. However, apart from the lofty notions of national integration and all that stuff, we cannot survive as a nation with the present practice, as it is a national and socio-political contradiction. The Supreme Court has helpfully stepped into the matter and in clear and unambiguous terms held that "The Preamble of Constitution promises and the directive principles are mandate to the State ..." (AIR 1992 Supreme Court 1858) in the *Mohini Jain* case. It has also held that the right to education is concomitant to fundamental rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution and that educational institutions must function to the best advantage of citizens, so that the opportunity to acquire education cannot be confined to richer sections of society. Preamble, which promises fraternity is a mandate on the State, so is the right to education in the directive principles. Along with fraternity, the Preamble also promises equality and justice in the matter of economic, social and political affairs of the society the State and the government. We find that the children of the deprived sections are engaged in child labour, they do not have suitable house to live, there street children, and the girls among them are all the more deprived because of the gender discrimination just as there is caste and untouchability discrimination against the scheduled castes. These varieties of discriminations and segregations have to be eradicated by the State action as a Constitution mandate. When you have only ghettos and slums and shanties inhabited by over 60% of the population across the country. How can you have a neighbourhood or the neighbourhood school? The common school system needs to be located in the larger social context in a holistic manner. The Supreme Court by its various judgements held minimum basic needs in terms of food, clothing, shelter, education, medical and livelihood as fundamental rights. However, now with its judgement in *Ms Mohini Jain* case that the preamble and the directive principles too, constitute fundamental rights enforceable at law, the national agenda in the matter of economic policy, health housing education, is already set. It is mandatory and inescapable for the Union and the States to give effect to this agenda through budget and policies within a time frame. The agenda now constitutes a prior Constitutional charge on the Consolidated Funds of the Union and the States.

To end segregations of the rich and poor, classes and masses, castes and out-castes male and female, ghettos and neighbourhood and to bridge the technology skill gap across, the divide the common school system is, in our considered view a historical necessity now amply justified by the Supreme Court pronouncements; in *Mohini Jain* (education), *Francis Mullin* (food and clothing, medicine, to live with dignity), *Vincent Panikangulara* (health and medicine), clean air and water in *Subhash Kumar V, Bihar* and housing in *Shanti Star Builder* case.

It is felt that to build a sound science and technology base of the individuals in the modern Indian society, teaching of science and mathematics on a compulsory basis recommended by the Kothari Commission can not over emphasised, but it should be accompanied by teaching of English as a compulsory subject from class five or earlier to end two nation theory and practice.

Neighbourhood school/common school should be a national school system and only the intellectually or physically and/or socially challenged children provided special schools. Navodaya and the similar schools, undoubtedly have to be converted to fall in line to establish real fraternity, that is, the kinship in the society, one that is actual and not notional or based on chance or opportunity. Article 14 of the Constitution is a mighty barrier against the discrimination or segregation, however, in the absence of any instrumentalities to enforce the fundamental rights and seek justice outside the jurisdiction of the High Courts and Supreme Court, blatant violations have persisted. Therefore, neighbourhood parents' committees and local tribunals should be constituted to upgrade the quality and supervise the implementation of the common school system. There cannot be a common school without housing and monitoring all children of the disadvantaged strata.

Overload of the classical languages on the mother tongue should be shed and the spoken language enriched by the borrowed language of the work place and the neighbourhood should be encouraged in the primary years of learning. To eliminate class bias though English should be taught from the fifth standard, failure to pass in it should not be a bar to promotion to next standard till the 8th standard. Likewise the entire range of education up to the age of 14 and the high school should be treated as a composite and all children must attain that level as a normal national schooling pattern.

Teaching should be upgraded so that the percentage of the pupils clearing should be near total and the failures and drop outs should be exceptions. In other words, the terminal examination results should be such that at least 90 to 95 percent of the high school candidates clear the examination and the high school pass should be the normal minimum achievement/standard of achievement of all adult citizens of India within a decade so as to meaningfully emerge as capable of joining the main stream in the country as well as outside the country.

Merit and non-merit is an instrument of maintaining the status quo and denial of the fundamental right to equality. Adequate number of schools of similar quality is now to be a prior charge on the consolidated fund of the State, therefore non-admission of a non-merit child in the neighbourhood school cannot be allowed to bar entry of the student. An Ex-chief Minister's son was not readmitted to his school by eminent nationalist school run by an ex-education minister of state, so were the girl students of the scheduled caste girls hostel were barred. Through the hostel situated in a night opposite the school gate and no argument by one of us could change the attitude of an eminent educationist of upper class.

The school in the above instance was run by a trust of the family relation of an industrialist, who had donated Rs.16000 to Gandhiji anonymously to run his ashram at Ahmedabad and his sister who founded the Textile Labour Association with Mahatma Gandhi is the institution which runs the scheduled caste girls hostel whose wards attend a run-down school in a congested old village building reached in another area of the city by bus. That school is obviously non-merit school and the nationalist school is a merit school as it admits the children of the well to do and upper caste/class. This is a violation of Article 14 of the Constitution. Therefore, the town planning scheme should provide better and equal housing to the poor and the segregated and the state should as in the case common bus order of the court enforced in the U.S.A. for the commuting black children in 1960's, the State should provide schools in the locality so that merit of the affluent does not bar the poor to show superior result at the terminal examination. In the run down school, you do not expect well paid or motivated teachers and facilities, so the two nation theory perpetuates in practice as the students of the school of the

mentonous perform well as they had already eliminated the non-mented and consigned them to some ghetto school. It is an atrocity on the Constitution as there are atrocities on humans.

The Constitution Assembly, elected on the vote of the 10% population that was eligible under the Government of India Act 1935 to take power from the British, has given assurances to the people through the government and the Constitution was made to further their interests; they have been compelled by the Supreme Court to fulfil those promises to the people in the form of fundamental rights. Therefore, common school system being the basis of nationhood and fraternity that they had promised is an inescapable commitment that the State has to fulfil. Inaction, non-action will undermine the basis of the State and the Society as it will be a flagrant violation of the Constitution.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

T.K. VARGHESE

In all countries where children are required to attend school up to a certain age by law, there is a compulsion on the Government to provide the required school spaces within reasonable distance of their homes. The child's right to education is for enabling him to earn his living. In India, up to the age of 14, the child has a fundamental right to free education. Thereafter, the right to equality of opportunity gives him access to further available education. While education has an acculturating role, it is not the responsibility of the educational system to cure social ills nor can the prevalence of social ills be termed a failure of the educational system as the report of the Kothari Commission states. The Commission then takes a great leap forward and recommends without justification, a communist style common school system whereby all children will per force attend the same designated neighbourhood school. The Committee imagines that with this step we would achieve national development as well as social and national integration. The only rational explanation for this warped line of thinking is that we were at that time enamoured of the Russian model, anything else being considered heretical. Since then we have been made a lot wiser by exposures of the Gulags and the cultural revolutions. We have seen the disintegration of USSR in striking contrast to the integration of peoples achieved through democracy in the USA. We should eschew all that smacks of State tyranny and indoctrination which are the antithesis of education. Nevertheless, let us analyse the matter.

The overwhelming majority of schools in all countries are run by the Government/local bodies. In India as a whole independent fee-charging schools constitute only 3.7%. In cities the proportion is higher. We have also some private aided institutions which do not charge fees. Why don't all parents send their children to the neighbouring government schools? In the Editorial in the National Herald of Oct 11, 1997 we read "school buildings are dilapidated and many on the verge of collapse. There are only two per cent schools with proper facilities and eight per cent where no facility is available. Teaching aids are conspicuous by their absence. Teacher-pupil ratio is inadequate, many schools have a single teacher." We

have also the record of results of Board examinations and the experience of employers, not to mention the drop-out rates

Sub-standard schools cheat the students of an education. This limits their employability, their potential and thus perpetuates their poverty. If this vicious cycle has to be broken, we have to upgrade the sub-standard schools to an acceptable level. Now that the world is rapidly moving towards the era in which human capital will determine the wealth of nations, this task of upgradation of such schools has to be tackled on the highest priority. Neighbourhoods will patronise the schools only in direct proportion to their quality. Our better private schools are comparable to those in the developed countries and so what is required is levelling-up, not levelling down.

In the democratic countries of the West, where compulsory education has been enforced for a long time, children have a right to be enrolled in the neighbourhood government school. This, however, is not a compulsion. They are at liberty to go to a private school, parochial or secular. In the USA they can now go to another government school in a different school district. This freedom of choice has not made those societies less egalitarian or more segregated. According to a recent survey conducted in the US, it has positively helped education.

The Commission's argument that if children attend the same school, parents will shed caste and class distinctions and the society will integrate is not based on any evidence. In fact, caste/class prejudices will fade away only in direct proportion to enlightenment which is not the same thing as school instruction. For example, over 60 years ago, Travancore State (now part of Kerala) could throw open its temples to all Hindus irrespective of caste. Kerala has been free from atrocities on dalits and communal conflicts. Evidence shows that such atrocities are abetted and engineered by the well-lettered and not by the unschooled, proving that what matters is the cultural mind set and not school instruction and much less instruction in the same school.

The Commission is again wrong in stating that the common school system will contribute to national integration. When a few hundred children residing in 6 or 7 square km in say Kanyakumari district go to the same school, how will they get integrated with the Gujaratis, the Kashmins or the Nagas? Because their teacher will tell them so? No, we will promote national integration when our political leaders think national and not parochial, when they stop fighting over boundaries and river waters, when the rubber planters of Kerala receive the same consideration as the wheat and rice farmers of Punjab and Haryana, when the north-eastern States are made to feel as

part of the mainstream, when the term son-of-the soil is banished from our lexicon; when religion remains a private matter and not used in politics, when linguistic chauvinism is not allowed to thrive .

As excellent example of national integration is provided by our Armed Forces, the seniormost of which has regiments some 250 years old and the youngest arm is 65 years old. We can learn a lot from them - the way they have achieved and maintained true national integration. Let us remember that they were not schooled together.

The primary function of schools is to provide good quality education to children so that they can develop to their full potential, earn their living and also meet the manpower needs of the nation. If we divert them from that role with slogans of national integration which they are not in a position to tackle we will only ruin school education. And school education is a one-way street. A child of 14 cannot be put back in Std I to learn what has not learnt.

Let us upgrade the non-performing schools to the required standard. A good measure of the neighbourhood school concept would follow when parents find that a good, free school is available across the road. This by itself would not lead to either national integration or disappearance of caste and class barriers for which the political leadership has to do a run around.

Let us also give the recommendation of the Kothari Commission for a common school system a respectable burial so that it does not raise its head again.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

Tomy Philip

Education should promote the methodical socialisation of students by refining perceptions and internationalisation of the values and work ethos of the society. This assumes greater significance in India characterised by ethnic diversities, religious and language differences, gender and economic inequality, unemployment etc that pose threats to the development of the country.

The system of education is the only means we have to counter these social evils, to reduce their effects and to attain social unity and national integration. Successive commissions on education in India and policy statements had emphasised this view in one form or the other. Despite these repeated pronouncements, the present system of education does not cater to the needs of national development. Not only that it tends to perpetuate and aggravate the present evils. We have different schools - differing in medium and/or syllabus, aided or unaided, local or central schools. And we have all the social evils - ethnic rivalry, inequality, injustice, intolerance, social segregation, poverty and unemployment. What is the link? What are the causes and effects?

There are two basic deficiencies in the present educational system with regard to the attainment of social goals. First, the very existence of different schools to cater to the need of different social groups and second, the lack of experiences conducive to socialisation at the classroom level. The simultaneous occurrence of these two factors leads to the following defects which perpetuate the present ills of the society and provides nothing to counter their acceleration.

- i. It promotes social inequality. The system gives importance to the financial and social position of the pupils rather than to the intellectual attainment of them.
- ii. It provides no opportunity for the internalisation of the values of the society. The value imbibed by the pupils are not of the society but of the group running the school.
- iii. It fails to realise the worth of individuals in the society. The pupils live and grow as an advantaged or disadvantaged, proud or depressed realising the system only after being moulded by it.
- iv. Training in qualities of good citizenship is not provided. Participation in social activities is useful only in the social advertisement of economic, political and social inequalities of the pupils and the civic efficiency measures are a clean failure.

- v. It deceives the poor The pupils from low economic and social classes fail to get rich experiences necessary for attaining social mobility. Being pressured to remain at ordinary schools when the aim is only the 3 R's, they are deceived by the system

To remove these defects and promote social cohesion and national development, the system of common schools can be a powerful instrument. Under this system, the children from a specific area are educated under one roof without regard to their economic, social and other status. The following merit may be pointed out on this system

- i It reduces discrimination meted out to pupils on the basis of economic and social position. Discrimination in opportunities will be limited to intellectual capabilities and aptitudes of the children
- ii It promotes social cohesion. By bringing all pupils, under one roof and granting the same experiences, children will get opportunities to co-operate with each other accepting their social, economic and intellectual position as a reality
- iii Meaningful activities can be provided to promote qualities of good citizenship. Public spirit and self-sacrifice for the common good will get the required psychological base from the common school system
- iv Practice of secularism and tolerance will become more meaningful
- v The values of the society and not of any particular class or group will be imbibed by the pupils

The arguments against the common school system may be the following

- i. The existence of schools now with different standards have already created an awareness among the people and a sudden or even gradual change in them may not be accepted by the upper and middle classes of the society.
- ii. The social or religious groups managing the present schools will oppose the new system for fear of losing their interests.
- iii. Political or bureaucratic interference in the selection of the common school will create social tension and communal rivalry.
- iv Organisation of new schools as common schools will involve establishment and transfer work which may be too high to bear.
- v Academic standard of the common schools will be affected due to its heterogeneous composition creating further 'existence' problems
- vi. Organisation and administration of common schools will require a management of high quality.

- vii This does not alter the classroom level deficiency of experiences conducive to socialisation

These arguments are not invalid and they should be given due recognition in evolving the measures to establish the common school system. The following steps may be taken

- i The whole nation should be made aware of the need for common schools. A nationwide discussions and seminars through all media involving educationists, teachers, parents, political and religious leaders should be conducted for this purpose. Only after evolving a national consensus, further steps should be taken to establish common schools.
- ii A national survey to take stock of the different schools, their standards, the nature of experience provided etc. should be conducted
- iii The system should start operation only in selected district in different regions on an experimental basis. Managers, teachers and parents should be given due training prior to the beginning. All organizational matters relating to building, furniture, teachers, students etc. should be settled before the commencement of the course
- iv The administration should ensure that there is no erosion of academic standards and that an atmosphere of growth is maintained
- v This should be accompanied with a national curriculum. Unit plans detailing the extra-social experience should be prepared and given to teachers
- vi The methods of teaching and learning should also be redesigned so as to promote the social and national objectives. The topics should be taught to strengthen intra-class interactions and community engagements.
- vii The discipline should be maintained by participating in and leading social activities
- viii There should be an efficient mechanism to evaluate the role played by teachers and administrators and to guide them at the district level.

The establishment of common school system involves a social revolution and to make such a change socially and economically viable, the management of the change should be judicious and effective. A change may be essential but may negate the very purpose if administration without wisdom yielding to pressures from different corners. The challenge before the nation is to create such a change and transform the classroom atmosphere to suit the needs of national development

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

UMESH CHANDRA MOHAPATRA

The Education Commission, (1964-66) had recommended a uniform, sound and ideal schooling for the country with an objective of uniform National development, equal educational opportunity for all, proper placement for the talents, irrespective of their economic conditions, providing charge free institutions of qualitative standards to meet the need of the average Indians and thereby breed in an egalitarian society. The commission had recommended this because they have marked the deficiency in stating that the system could not cater to the needs and the aspiration of the common social class.

But all these goals set by the commission have lost their target due to non implementation of the programme immediately with a sincerity of purpose. Three Years holiday in the planning (1966-69) contributed a lot to the denudation of purpose of the recommendations of the commission. The decades of seventies had seen a deterioration in the temper and tone of political will or decision making and by and large had influenced the implementation process of the Commission's recommendations. Due to the importance given on the technical and higher education on the recommendation of the University Commission of 1947, due weightage could not be given to the school education until late seventies. On the other hand we did not follow a rigid, clearly defined, well experimented logical pattern of common school education of our own for the country, rather we were always on the way of taking an average of different systems adopted in various foreign soils. To add to it our system had always overlooked the manpower planning linked with education for which we were deprived of the desired output in the field of education. The name and game of democracy has distracted us from the goal suggested by the Commission and to a major extent had frustrated the very intention of the common school system as suggested by the Commission. After the New Education Policy, 1986 people had tried to think of the primary education seriously and thereby it has gained support and drawn attention of all but the Secondary Education is yet to have it.

Those problems of disparity in Schooling system, felt by Commission, are still present, as the higher economic group of the society patronise the high fee charging schools/public school, engaged in producing ultra modern fashion groomed taughts. In addition to the prevailing economic contrasted society, segregation of the poverty stricken children starts from the birth itself in the form of schooling as there is a lot of disparity between general schools and public schools. The people having low affordable capability are compelled to push in their children to an ill maintained, ill furnished educational premises where the personnel are groomed under the banner of the Government with pseudo political control.

After thirty years of Commission's recommendations institutions of two different characters have been functioning at primary and secondary level. Some states have got the higher secondary stage in the college wing and some state are having the higher secondary schools at school level or at a separate stage. But all these schools have been divided into two clear cut compartments, one is Govt. managed and the other is privately managed institutions. The Government run institutions have their natural characteristics of lethargy, indifference and callousness due to lack of personal initiation or administrative lacunae, whereas the privately run institutions are ready to sell out their educated human stock of varying standards.

The Commission had admitted the existence of the segregating force in the system which is gradually aggravating the situation. Those privately managed institutions under different religious, commercial and social banners with multifarious objectives have been catering to the educational needs of the society, and enhancing the segregation. They could create a sea of difference in the provisions of teaching personnel, basic infrastructures, and experimentation of different curricular, co-curricular and extra curricular activities for their taughts. This could be possible for the privately run institutions only because they could find support from the people of higher economic group. On the other hand the Government run institutions even the Sainik Schools and Navodaya Vidyalayas have failed to impress upon the society as well as to attract the children of the upper economic class people. The Government run institutions without any new innovations have adhered to the prescribed curriculum, whereas their counterparts have been experimenting with number of years of schooling in the curriculum, as well as in the contents of the course. Addition of moral teaching, yoga, computers, performing arts, language, school timings in the curriculum, introduction of expensive indoor and outdoor games etc., had boosted the expenses of

the parents and had attracted much of business to the field of schooling. The ideal pattern which had been suggested in the NEP, 1986 and modified in 1992 is much suited provision for this country but the implementation part of it is lacking in many respects. While taking action on the implementation of the system following may be considered to bring in the cherished achievement.

- a) There should be no compromise in the provision of years of schooling through out the country
- b) One more years of schooling at the primary level should be added which should be undertaken by education workers instead of the workers of Intensive Child Development scheme.
- c) In order to restrict political interference in the operational part of the system, rigid legislation should be made as done for Prasarbharati
- d) Full accountability should be imposed on each worker in the system and for this necessary instrument should be devised
- e) Throughout the country only one system of course curriculum should be followed upto secondary level. There should be no discriminatory courses like CBSE or ICSE, or HSC. In the uniform syllabus only discriminating criteria on language should be made, Provision of higher content for talented individuals may be made at higher secondary level.
- f) Temper and tone of administrative control of education should be kept free from political alignments so that the machinery can be accountable for its function in all dimensions
- g) In order to comply to the demand for the professional competency the teacher should be entrusted with teaching works only and the Govt. run school teachers should be kept free from the work like mid-day meals, Census, voter list, BPL Commodity distribution etc.
- h) Special programme linked with incentives, should be undertaken for girls education as half of the rural adolescent girls are still illiterate.
- i) Introduction of privatisation in imparting education, may be experimented for particular backward area, with full, strict monitoring arrangements, where govt run institutions are a sheer failure
- j) Curriculum should be so framed, so that It can impart value education and education should go hand in hand with culture of the land.

- k) Intensive reconstruction of infrastructure in rural areas for primary and secondary schools should be undertaken on priority basis
- l) Revision and updating of course-curriculum should be undertaken every three years, with prior experimentation
- m) Creativity is not encouraged due to monotonous and corrupt examination practices. Steps may be taken for formation of efficient examination system, so that talents cannot be overlooked
- n) Proper manpower planning should be linked with the system, so that the rush for the higher education can be discouraged
- o). Strict and standardised public examination at the end of each level of schooling i.e. Primary, Secondary should be fitted into the system
- p) Self devised unscrupulous curriculum at different levels by various organisations should be strictly discouraged
- q) Political institutions deprave the system and accordingly an independent body like UGC should be established
- r) Policy should be framed to provide eight years of schooling for each individual of the country
- s) Compulsory attendance in the primary schools should be the responsibility of the Local self government and by this expenses on Non Formal education at Primary level can be saved
- t) Physical education, health education and definite work experiences should be the integral part of the school curriculum

VISION FOR RENAISSANCE OF EDUCATION IN INDIA : AN OPTIMUM MIX FOR COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

V. PRATAP

ABSTRACT

Education has a formative effect on an individual and forms a basic tool for self-defence in modern society. Although the emergence of an integrated, egalitarian society had been envisaged as early as the initial days of independence, it is still to be implemented. The current scenario of paramount social segregation and fragmentation of society is a profound tragedy. A few steps and measures to arrest this situation and initiated the establishment of Common School System for national development are discussed. The need for creation of a level playing ground and to concede the aspirations of all to get educated are expressed among other plausible suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

Any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual can be called education. Education is a basic tool for self-defence in modern society. Basic Education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India (Gandhiji). It develops both the body and mind of the child. Despite our constitutional directive of providing free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of fourteen, the fact is that today more than six crore of them have still not seen the doors of school.

The evolution of state policy started in earnest right after independence with a view of promoting the emergence of an integrated egalitarian society. For a nation that won its freedom nothing but the torch of knowledge will light the way to a happy future (Brezhnev). The constitution envisaged fulfilling this promise by 1960. But the last fifty years of independence have witnessed instead, growth of tensions and conflicts among religions, caste, tribal and linguistic communities leading to perpetuating social segregation and fragmentation of society due to lack of education. It is a stupendous task in front of us to arrest this decline and take urgent steps to ensure proper corrective measures.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Education is today a prime factor leading to the perpetuation of inequalities among individuals in our society. The average period spent by an Indian at school is an abysmal low of a little over two years. This profound tragedy has led to the growth of illiterates in our country. The feeling of powerlessness, ignorance, superstitions and other related perceptions has crept into the core of our society. However things have begun to look up with the increase in literacy rate from 16.67% in 1951 to 52.21% in 1991. The lack of parental motivation and large scale child labour are two important deterrents responsible for keeping our children away from school. The eight crore strong child work force even though have enough spare time find the school time clashing with the work time. The need to tax such children to work hard at this tender age to feed themselves and other older mouths speak of the economic hardships confronting our people.

The few lucky ones who attend school do not find it interesting. The teachers have no confidence in the concept of 'joyful learning'. The dearth of conscientious teachers, properly defined teaching methodology, scarce resources like unaffordable price of books and clothes and poor infrastructural facilities to mention a few drive most children away sooner or later. The dearth of adequate teachers is manifested by the high pupil - teacher ratio, speak not of quality teachers. The social value attached to this sacred profession has been totally demolished over the years.

The government allots every year upto 4% of GDP for educational expenditure. Even after all these financial support, the state of affairs have moved from bad to worse. The government has resorted to taking solace in programmes like Operation Blackboard, National mid-day meal scheme etc. However these schemes have not created any impact at all as they are basically degenerated, however well intentioned they have been at the start.

The affluent sections of society are privileged that their children can afford to get educated at any cost. They are also partly responsible for keeping the poor, weaker sections ignorant. This has instead of liberating all, promoted discrimination, dependency and slave - like tendencies. The transmission of knowledge is lost and so the instrument of power. This has largely contributed to the falling standards of intellectual, moral, physical and aesthetic capabilities of our society. The rapid growth

of population has adversely affected all our attempts to strengthen the education system resulting in increase in abject poverty. Education, population growth and poverty seem to be intimately interrelated and has a cascading effect on each other

The revival of our educational system and further erosion of values needs to be addressed immediately

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CSS

The current economic disparity in our society does not allow economically poor children to attend school. The prerequisite of creation of a level playing ground is essential. A parent who cannot afford a meal for his child prefers his child to work than sending to school. Therefore, if a Common School System has to be implemented, a conducive environment where children get two square meals a day all through the year, has to be established. The two sweeping changes conceived for achieving these ends are

- i) The unequal distribution of land has to be altered such that every citizen has some land in his motherland. The government should ensure that such lands are cultivable. Just as territory is essential for statehood, the state should ensure that all citizens have some fertile land. The modalities can be worked out by parliament provided the principle is accepted.
- ii) The right to work which found expression in the United Nations declaration of universal rights is to be adopted as a fundamental right.

If such a congenial environment is established, the implementation of CSS can get initiated. The following suggestions are proposed for promoting CSS.

Establishment of basic educational infrastructure conducive to learning like buildings with classrooms, toilets, non-leaking roofs, playground and provision for drinking water.

A nationwide Mass Awareness Campaign on the benefits of education through mass media. Public servants must be asked to compulsorily participate in the mobilisation on the lines of conscription. The voluntary agencies can also help propagate the concept.

Existing teaching methods should be done away and scientifically designed methods be adopted so that the curiosity of the children is awakened.

Traditional bookish method should be supplemented by a programme of practical/productive work intimately linked with formal instructions

The victory of allied forces in 1945 heralded a new era raising aspirations throughout the world and emphasis was placed on education as a basic human right. A constitutional amendment to make education a fundamental right is urgently needed to make CSS a reality

The availability of financial resources as per budgetary allocation seems adequate. If a newly designed CSS still needs funding we can think of (i) setting up of a National Education Commission for CSS through an act of parliament with a purpose of guiding, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the system with delegation of power in principle and practice (ii) a National Education Renewal fund can be established under the supervision of the National Education Commission. Contributions from corporate business houses and individuals may be granted full tax exemption. Voluntary contribution from NRIs are to be encouraged

- ⇒ The technological advancement in the field of information can be exploited to bring about easier and quicker learning as text can be supplemented with audio-visual assistance
- ⇒ In order to attract the most talented to the teaching profession teachers should be given competitive emoluments and excellence in performance should be recognised and rewarded
- ⇒ Even after doing work, the children have plenty of time on their hands. A well designed evening class system for two-three hours with provision for free supper can be tried as an interim measure before child labour is abolished
- ⇒ The CSS should be absolutely free for all poor children. Free education is suggested as a Directive Principle of state policy. Today a minimum of at least Rs.400/- per year has to be shouldered to send a child to school. This financial burden should be borne through the new PDS for the poor.
- ⇒ The National Literacy Mission should also spread the message of CSS for instilling a people's movement to take up this gigantic task
- ⇒ The fulfillment of job responsibilities by the teachers must be carried out to assess the effectiveness of CSS

⇒ CSS can iterate with the social milieu through dedicated individuals and institutions taking the lead.

CSS will be a tremendous force that can shape the life and future of a nation with a fervent aim to teach children to work and live together. Initiation of such a system requires above all much political will and public pressure. It will require a radical change as education in vogue today continues to receive a low priority.

If the above is taken care, this will set the ball roll. Finally the quotation of Tolstory "I set on a man's back choking him and making him carry me and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means - except getting off from his back. My only plea is let us not follow this man, but follow his words.

CONCLUSIONS

The evolution of education policy envisaged creation of an integrated egalitarian society. However, instead the gulf between different social classes have widened and today social segregation has attained its zenith. It is suggested that a level playing ground be created for the initiation of implementation of Common School System. The aspirations of all to get educated must be conceded. A few other plausible steps are also suggested.

CREATION OF THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION - AN ARTICLE OF PUBLIC FAITH

V.P. Garg

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A period when Indian economy was passing through 'commanding height phase' of public sector dominance, Kothari Commission (1964-66) has echoed its concern by suggesting a Neighbourhood School Plan as a step towards eliminating segregation between schools for the poor and the under-privileged and those for the rich and the privileged ones. This recommendation was to provide legitimacy to egalitarian education in order to fulfil the spirit of the Preamble of the Constitution which speaks about democratic, secular, socialist Indian Republic. Over the years, there has been expansion of Government institutions at all stages including private aided institutions which are also funded and controlled by Government regulations. This paper critically examines

"growing perception in the country that during the past three decades, our education system instead of moving closer to the goal of the Common School System has moved further away from it".

1.2 The question is whether this perception is blurred or articulated? If the public perception is true then what could be the future directions to retrieve the education system? The issue could be debated under social, ethical, economic legal and educational domains.

2.0 Social and Ethical

2.1 As Peter Townsend (1993,136) puts it: "Human needs are essentially social and analysis or exposition of standard of living and poverty must begin with that fact."

Education essentially fulfils this social needs. That is why United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from its start and the World Bank after 1980 have emphasised education as a means to human development. The Human Development Index (HDI) is based on three indicators: longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth, educational attainment as measured by a combination of adult literacy (two-thirds weight) and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratio (one-third

weight), and standard of living, as measured by real GDP per capita (PPP\$). According to UNDP 1997 Human Development Report, India's HDI rank is 138th among 175 countries and among 78 developing countries its position is 47th. It is only Kerala which ranks the highest among Indian States and more than 20 places higher than India in HDI. So education as a vibrant and catalytic force for improving HDI is to rejuvenate poor of the poorest in scheme of planning for development. The benefits of educational policy, planning and its processes should percolate down to the so-called marginalised groups viz. women, disabled, SCs, STs, minorities, poor of the poorest in the rural areas and urban slums. Anti-poverty programmes have been in operation since 1978. Integrated Rural Development Programme on a pilot basis was launched in that year. These anti-poverty programmes in India are of two types: self-employment and wage-employment. Some social security schemes like National Social Assistance Programmes like MP's Local Area Development Programme are also there.

2.2 The Ninth Plan's Approach Paper rightly emphasises social ethos of people's participation in nation building for the socio-economic development of the country. It states:

"The principal task of the Ninth Plan will be to usher in a new era of people oriented planning in which only the Governments at the Center and the States but the people at large particularly the poor, can fully participate."

2.3 The estimates of the 1996 HDI Report on India indicates that 61.5% of the population in India could be categorised as 'capability poor' while 25.4% were 'income poor' i.e. below the poverty line in 1993.³

3.0 Economic Aspect

3.1 Since July, 1991 Indian economy is being re-aligned onto market-driven which allows the use of fiscal and financial incentives to level the playing field between private and social cost/benefit. Education as a part of this economic frame is expected to adjust accordingly. Institutional development, capacity building, the reduction of information asymmetries, transparency in administration, private initiative, diversification, decentralisation of management, the extensive use of science and information technology to ensure compatibility with the objectives of sustainable

development will be the desired and directed process and action plan. The underlying currents of educational policy and formulations of planning, curriculum, process of learning, evaluation procedures etc. stand constant scrutiny towards the acid test of improving HDI.

4.0 Legal Aspect

4.1 Indian Constitution guarantees under Articles 19, 29, 30 and Directive Principles of the State Policy active participation both of the public and private sector in order to achieve holistic national development and right kind of motivation for achieving just and equitable social order. So far the role of private sector is concerned, there is strong evidence that it has played its due role. The history of education is replete with such type of missions and voluntary organisations and their credentials.

4.2 The title of the Kothari Commission was rightly framed as 'Education and National Development'. In order to achieve this goal, there has been large expansion of Government institutions over the last 50 years. The role of the Central Government has accelerated after education being put in the concurrent list in 1976. This recommendation was made by the Education Commission. Since then the Central Government has brought in a large number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) which were not only innovative in dispensation but also strengthened the structural base of the Common School System. The State Governments have found a great relief in receiving funds under CSS. According to the Sixth All India Educational Survey (as on 30th September, 1993) there were 515907 primary schools, 127188 upper primary schools, 31029 secondary schools and 9918 higher secondary schools under the Government plus management under Local Bodies. If we add private aided schools which are also funded in large measure (90-95%) by the Government then the so-called Common School System of Public Education has grown tremendously and there appears no apprehension that in future the growth of these institutions is bound to increase particularly at the primary and upper primary level keeping in view the State responsibility of Universalisation of Elementary Education as a fundamental right. It may be noted here that primary education is the first ladder for this Common School System. In terms of finance, 3.7% of the GDP is invested by the Government besides investment by the private sector for which no firm information is available. Investment of 6% of GDP in Education sector is a committed goal.

5.0 Education Aspect - Agenda for Future Reference

5.1 Human development will be the concern of the next Century. New indicators are likely to be added in the matrix of this index. The addendum of these indicators will become paramount because there is concern for sustainable development which enjoins economic growth with social equity. So far Education sector concerned, the capability to be educated and knowledgeable will be major agenda which will cut across all sectors of economy particularly social sector which include health, housing, nutrition, child care, conservation and management of natural resources, re-generation and restoration of degraded eco-system, health manpower development and training, health services in urban and rural areas, disease control, management of bio-technology, poverty alleviation programmes, in-service training programmes, for a learning society, emphasis on the use of science and information technology. It is, therefore, necessary to look afresh and take a stock of the education system in all its dimensions. The systems should be an enabling exercise for the following

- ⇒ directing planning process for concerns as reflected under para 5.1
- ⇒ institutional development by adopting a self-regulating control for positive results
- ⇒ capacity building by a well articulated support system and supporting programmes
- ⇒ enhancing community ownership of institutions and day-to-day management through empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies under the respective Acts
- ⇒ networking of educational institutions vis-a-vis other institutions for purpose of achieving optimal use of resources and providing opportunities for sharing their experiences.
- ⇒ promoting the cause and role of the self-help groups, voluntary organisations, professional bodies in order to seek private initiative for innovative ideas and experimentation
- ⇒ building and winning public faith in government agencies/institutions through responsive work-culture
- ⇒ introducing an academic audit system and developing performance indicators with in-built incentives and disincentives
- ⇒ interfacing of education sector with other sectors of economy in order to realign itself

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भारत में वर्तमान विद्यालयी शिक्षा व्यवस्था व उसमें सुझाव के सुझाव

— आनन्द सिंह शैरी

शिक्षा देश के विकास की प्रक्रिया से जुड़ी रहती है। विद्यालय मानव निर्माण स्थल होते हैं। यहाँ छात्र-छात्राओं के नैतिक, बौद्धिक, शारीरिक व समाज सेवा की शिक्षा देने और समाजोत्थान कार्य में अभिरुचि पैदा करना और अंतर्गतत्वा राष्ट्र प्रेम के रंग में रंगना आवश्यक होता है।

हमारा राष्ट्र सशक्त बने, समाज समुन्नत हो, मानवमात्र का कल्याण हो इसके लिए यह आवश्यक है कि प्रत्येक नागरिक मन से पवित्र, शरीर से स्वस्थ, समाज का सच्चा सेवक व देश भक्त बने। यह सब चरित्र निर्माण विद्यालय में ही होता है।

शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में आजादी के डम मीलों चले हैं और कोसों चलना शेष है। वर्ष 1991 में भारत की आवादी 84 करोड़ 63 लाख थी जो पूरे विश्व की आवादी की 16 प्रतिशत थी, जबकि देश का भौगोलिक विस्तार विश्व के स्थल भाग का 2.49 प्रतिशत है। इतनी बड़ी जनसंख्या की शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, भरण-पोषण औद्योगिक व प्रौद्योगिक विकास व पर्यावरण संतुलन को संभालना नहीं है। विद्यालयी सामान्य शिक्षा की रास्ते के सदैवसुखी विकास में भले भ्रमका अनुभवाती है। विकास का रास्ता विद्यालय छोकर ही जाता है। जिसने यह रास्ता नहीं जाना वह आगे नहीं बढ़ा।

1951 की जनगणना में देश की साक्षरता का प्रतिशत 18.33 था, जो अब 1991 में बढ़कर 53 प्रतिशत हो गया। और पिछले अर्धशताब्दी में यह और भी बढ़ गया होगा क्योंकि प्राथमिक शिक्षा के विस्तार के साथ कतिपय जनपदों में समग्र साक्षरता अभियान व अनौपचारिक शिक्षा केन्द्रों के खोले जाने के फलस्वरूप इसमें निःसंदेह वृद्धि हुई है। अब अंकड़े बताते हैं कि अब 6 वर्ष की उम्र के लगभग 80 % बच्चे स्कूल में दाखिला लेने लगे हैं, भले ही इनमें से 20 प्रतिशत बच्चे किन्हीं कारणों से विद्यालय में नियमित रूप से उपस्थित नहीं होते हैं और कक्षा 5 में पहुँचते - पहुँचते इस संख्या में ह्रास होता रहता है। विश्व बैंक से भी भारत को प्राथमिक शिक्षा योजना 8 से 10 वर्ष वय वर्ग 8 को सिर्फ दो तिहाई ही सफल माना है। देश में 6 से 12 वर्ष के लगभग साढ़े दस करोड़ बच्चों में से लगभग एक तिहाई ने स्कूल का मुह नहीं देखा है। विद्यालयों में शिक्षकों व कक्षा कक्षों की भी कमी है। आमतौर पर एक प्राथमिक विद्यालय में दो कक्षा कक्ष, एक बरामदा व एक प्राशासनिक कक्ष

होता है। यह स्थान 5 कक्षाओं के बच्चों हेतु अपर्याप्त होता है। इसी प्रकार अधिकांश प्राथमिक विद्यालय में दो अध्यापक तैनात हूँ रहते हैं। इस प्रकार एक शिक्षक को तीन कक्षाओं का शिक्षण कार्य करना होता है। इससे भी शिक्षा में गुणवत्ता गुणात्मक हरास हुआ है। जन-जन को शिक्षा की सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने के लिए निरन्तर बढ़ती जनसंख्या के अनुपात में विद्यालय, कक्षा कक्ष, शिक्षण सामग्री के रूप में यह सुविधा बजट प्रावधान के तद्विरुद्ध न बढ़ास जाने से और भी न्यून होती जा रही है। 1968 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में शिक्षा के लिए कुछ राष्ट्रीय आय का 6 प्रतिशत बजट प्रावधान हूँ किस जाने की संस्तुति की गई थी। और यदि 6% का प्रावधान कर भी दिया गया तो 1968 से आज तक के तीन दशकों में जनसंख्या में हुई वृद्धि के लिए यह 6% प्रावधान भी न्यून है और इसे बढ़ाया जाना होगा।

शिक्षा की पसहत्ता को देखते हुए प्राथमिक व उच्च प्राथमिक शिक्षा अर्थात् 6 से 14 वर्ष वय वर्ग के बच्चों को अनिवार्य रूप से शिक्षा देना भारतीय संविधान में मौलिक अधिकार के रूप में माना गया है और वर्ष 1960 तक इसे निशुल्क प्राथमिक शिक्षा का प्रावधान संविधान के अनुच्छेद 45 में किया गया है। वर्ष 1960 तो दूर रहा वर्ष 1997 तक भी 6-10 वर्ष वय वर्ग तक के शत प्रतिशत बच्चों को विद्यालयी प्राथमिक शिक्षा सुविधा प्रदान नहीं की जा सकी। दूसरे शब्दों में यह भी कहा जा सकता है कि समस्या पढ़ने वाले बच्चों की उतनी नहीं है। जितनी कि शिषकों, कक्षा कक्षों व पठन सामग्री की है। भारत में 6-14 वर्ष के बच्चों की संख्या 18 करोड़ के लगभग है।

नई शिक्षा नीति 1986 के लागू किए जाने के उपरान्त बालिकाओं की शिक्षा में वर्ष 1986 - 93 की अवधि में 20% की वृद्धि हुई है। इसी प्रकार अनुसूचित जाति व जनजाति तथा समाज के अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों के बच्चों का साधरता प्रतिशत भी बढ़ा है। प्राथमिक शिक्षा के मामले में भारत पूर्वी एशियाई देशों से भी पीछे है। आंकड़े बताते हैं कि चीन, मलेशिया व इंडोनेशिया जैसी तेजी से प्रगति कर रही आर्थिक शक्तियाँ भी भारत से पहले अपना लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लेंगी। प्राथमिक शिक्षा के अभाव में उत्पन्न समस्या यही पर समाप्त नहीं हो जाती इसका अगला चरण है बालश्रम। विश्व में बालश्रम की सबसे ज्यादा भागीदारी भारत की ही है। भारत के कुल घरेलू उत्पाद में इन नन्हें मजदूरों की भागीदारी 20% के आस पास है। साधरता का प्रसिद्ध पत्रिका जहाँ केरल जैसे राज्य में सर्वाधिक है वहाँ राजस्थान, विहार व उत्तर प्रदेश में न्यून है।

देश में शिक्षा का विस्तार प्राथमिक, माध्यमिक व डिग्री आदि सभी स्तरों पर हुआ है। यहाँ पर यह बात भी ध्यान रखने की है कि जो सामान्य शिक्षा सभी तकदेशवासियों को मिल पाई है उसकी गुणवत्ता क्या है। यह बात निर्विवाद है कि जहाँ किसी कार्य अथवा उद्योग में विस्तार होता है वहाँ उसका गुणवत्ता में कमी आ ही जाती है। यह बात जहाँ एक ओर कृषि, स्वास्थ्य व बागवानी आदि में लागू होती है वहाँ दूसरी ओर शिक्षा में भी चरितार्थ होती है। आजादी के उपर उपरान्त सभी प्रदेशों में स्कूलों व अनौपचारिक शिक्षा केन्द्रों की ब्राइ ती आ गई है और इससे शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता का हरास हुआ है, भारत आखिरी मू-मंडल पर जनसंख्या की दृष्टि से दूसरे नम्बर का जनबहुल देश है और इतने बड़े देश में विद्यालयी शिक्षा सुविधा उपलब्ध कराना कोई खेल भी नहीं है। देश में सदियों से चले आ रहे कुटीर उद्योगों की उपेक्षा के कारण शिक्षा का सीधा संबंध नौकरी अथवा प्रदत्त रोजगार से जोड़ दिया गया है। स्व रोजगार दायम दर्जे की चीज हो गई है। येनकेन प्रकारेण परीक्षा प्रमाण-पत्र प्राप्त करना और कुछ मामलों में गलत तरीकों से डिग्री व उसकी श्रेणियाँ हासिल कर नौकरी प्राप्त करना शिक्षा का एकमात्र ध्येय हो गया है। देश व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार के कारण लगता है कि शिक्षा अपने उद्देश्य से भटक गई है। वर्तमान में शिक्षा अपने मूल उद्देश्य से हटकर जीविकोपार्जन का साधन मात्र बन गई है। जीविकोपार्जन का साधन बनने पर भी वह रोजगारपरक नहीं है। शिक्षा ही एक मात्र ऐसा माध्यम है जो धर्म, जाति व भाषा को विभिन्न कड़ियों को जोड़ती है। यह राष्ट्रियता की सशक्त संवाहक है। यह हमें जाति, धर्म, रंग रूप, क्षेत्रीयता व संकीर्णता के बंधनों से मुक्त करती है। प्रसिद्ध दार्शनिक अल्सवनी के अनुसार शिक्षा अति : शक्तियों का विकास है। " तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय " यह कामना भारतीय संस्कृति का मेरुदण्ड है।

शिक्षित समाज में आज नेतिकता का बहुत कारण हुआ है। अर्थ या धन दुनिया में जीवन की पहली प्राथमिकता तो है लेकिन एकमात्र नहीं। धर्म, आस्था, प्यार, घृणा आदि आदमी की मूल मनोवृत्तियाँ हैं। जिन्हें वस्तुगत विकास से छुट्टा या बदला नहीं जा सकता। विकास की दोनों अवधारणायें चाहें वे पूँजीवादी हों या साम्यवादी इसी भुलावे में हैं कि व्यक्ति का जीवनस्तर अच्छा होना चाहिए। पूँजीवाद से धर्म को विकास में बाधक व साम्यवाद ने अवैज्ञानिक विचार बताकर खारिज कर दिया। लेकिन वैज्ञानिक विकास का इतने व्यर्थ का ठोस अनुभव यह साबित करता है कि आदमी को समझने में दोनों पद्धतियों ने मूल की अत्यन्त वैभव प्राप्त पाश्चात्य

सम्यता की मन की शांति के लिए "हिप्पी कट" या संस्कृति को जन्म दिया ।

आइन्सटीन से यह पूछने पर कि तीसरा विश्व युद्ध कितने लड़ा जायेगा तो उन्होंने उत्तर दिया कि तीसरे युद्ध के बारे में तो कुछ नहीं कहा जा सकता । लेकिन चौथा विश्व युद्ध पत्थरों से लड़ा जायेगा । " लड़ने का मतलब जीवन पद्धति से है । आइन्सटीन का मतलब यह लगाया जा सकता है कि आदमी इस विकास व उपभोग के दोनो आयामों में पहुँचकर एक बार फिर मौलिक जीवन पद्धति, आस्था और विश्वास के युग में आयेगा ।

विकास ने आज एक जीवन दर्शन को मद्धा है जिसका नाम है " उपभोग " । उपभोग आज के आदमी का अंतिम लक्ष्य है । उपभोग केन्द्रित विकास और परिणाम केन्द्रित राजनीति और आदमी का आदमी से भावनात्मक विलगाव तीन कारणों ने जीवन में धर्म की महत्ता को बढ़ा दिया है । नैतिकता का विकास किए बिना अनुष्य का वास्तविक सर्वतामुखी विकास संभव नहीं है । अकेला औद्योगिक व आर्थिक विकास ही सब कुछ नहीं है नैतिकता वह आंतरिक भावना है जो उचित या अनुचित का निर्णय करती है ।

भारत अपनी धार्मिक और पौराणिक विरासत से संबंधित है लेकिन इस विरासत को भुला दिया गया है । यह विभिन्न धर्मों व जातियों का देश है । समय-समय पर लोग में धार्मिक छिद्र खो जाते हैं । और लोग आपसी झूल खराबे के लिए तैयार हो जाते हैं । स्वामी विवेकानंद के अनुसार " फोलो वन हेट वन " की शिक्षा का अनुसरण किया जाए तो सामाजिक सौहार्द, भाईचारा व समरसता पैदा होगी । हमारे पास वेद, पुराण व उपनिषदों के रूप में अपार सांस्कृतिक धरोहर है । छात्रों का वेदान्त व आध्यात्मिक शिक्षा का अध्ययन आज के परिपेक्ष में आवश्यक हो गया है । विभिन्न धर्मों के रूप में भले ही रास्ते अलग-2 हैं, लेकिन सबका लक्ष्य एक ही है । परमेश्वर की सत्ता को मन मस्तिष्क में दृढ़तापूर्वक स्थापित करना । इसलिए यह आवश्यक है कि माध्यमिक स्तर पर छात्रों को साधू संतों व विभिन्न धर्मों की मुख्य-मुख्य बातों का ज्ञान कराया जा सके ताकि धार्मिक सहिष्णुता विद्यार्थी जीवन से ही छात्रों के मन मस्तिष्क में बैठकर जाय ।

भारत विभिन्न धर्मों, जातियों, वर्गों व भाषाओं तथा रीतिरिवाजों का देश है । इन सभी बीच एकता, सामंजस्य, सहिष्णुता व सह अस्तित्व आदि गुणों का समावेश शिक्षितों में होना है । ज्यों-ज्यों हम समय होने का दम भर रहे हैं त्यों-

त्यों हम जीवन के मूल्यों से भटक रहे हैं । बाहर से हम जितने सम्य दीख रहे हैं भीतर उसने ही स्वार्थी भीतिकवादी, आत्म केन्द्रित अहंकारी तथा हिंसक प्रवृत्ति वाले बन रहे हैं । " वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् " की बात अब भीतें सम्य की हो गई है । इतीलए आम लोगों की जिव्या पर यही बात है कि शिक्षा अपने लक्ष्यों से दूर होती जा रही है और इसमें आमूलचूल परिवर्तन की आवश्यकता है । इस आवश्यकता की पूर्ति की अपेक्षा विद्यालयी शिक्षा से ही की जा रही है ।

सन् 1986 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा में पारित प्रस्तावों के अनुसार निम्नलिखित बिन्दुओं पर बल दिया गया था :

- 1- 14 वर्ष के बच्चों को निशुल्क अनिवार्य शिक्षा ।
- 2- शिक्षकों के वेतन में सुधार हेतु सतर्कता ।
- 3- प्रतिमाओं की पहचान कच्चे उम्र में ।
- 4- कार्यानुभव व राष्ट्रीय सेवा को शिक्षा का प्रमुख अंग बनाना ।
- 5- पाठ्य पुस्तकों व शिक्षा पद्धति में सुधार ।
- 6- 10 वर्ष की सामान्य शिक्षा व्यवस्था 2 वर्ष का उच्चतर माध्यमिक व 3 वर्ष का डिग्री कोर्स ।
- 7- साक्षरता बढ़ाने हेतु अभियान, अल्प संख्यकों के हितों की रक्षा, भाषा विज्ञान, शोध तथा शारीरिक शिक्षा केन्द्रों को समुचित व्यवस्था तथा युवकों को स्वरोजगार हेतु प्रशिक्षित करना ।
- 8- शिक्षा के बजट प्रावधान बढ़ाये जाएँ और कुल राष्ट्रीय आय का 6 प्रतिशत शिक्षा के लिए निर्धारित किए जाएँ ।

जहाँ तक प्रथम बिन्दु का प्रश्न है यह 14 वर्ष की निशुल्क व अनिवार्य शिक्षा का लक्ष्य वर्ष 1960 तक पूरा होता था व 14 वर्ष लो दूर रहा अभी तक 10 वर्ष तक लक्ष्य अभी दूर है । प्रारम्भिक प्राथमिक शिक्षा बच्चे नीव तैयार करती है । यह नीव ढीली न हो ।

केवल विश्व विद्यालय स्तर पर वेतन मानों में सुधार हुआ है और प्राथमिक व माध्यमिक स्तर पर यह सुधार नहीं है और उन्हें सामान्य कर्मचारी की भाँति वेतन दिया जा रहा है । कार्यानुभव योजना माध्यमिक स्तर पर उानापुरी मात्र है ।

जहाँ तक स्वरोज्जार हेतु युवकों को प्रशिक्षित करने की बात है, इंटरमीडिएट स्तर पर कतिपय विद्यालयों में व्यावसायिक शिक्षा लागू की गई है, लेकिन यह भी सामग्री व योग्य शिक्षकों के अभाव में कारगर नहीं हो रही है। लाभार्थियों की संख्या अति न्यून है।

जहाँ तक शिक्षा के बजट बढ़ाने का प्रावधान की बात है ऐसा नहीं लगता कि इसमें वृद्धि हुई है और यह 4 प्रतिशत के आस पास है। बढ़ती हुई जनसंख्या व छात्र संख्या के फलस्वरूप प्रति छात्र यह आवंटन न्यून हो रहा है।

शिक्षा वर्तमान व भविष्य निर्माण का अनुपम साधन है। शिक्षा का उद्देश्य केवल जानकारी व सूचनाएँ देना व पोथी रटा देना नहीं अपितु बच्चे की प्रतिभा का विकास व उसे सांस्कारित करना है। उन्हें अच्छे बुरे की पहचान हो तथा नैतिकता व अनैतिकता की सोच विकसित करना हो। उसमें सृजनशीलता, भाईचारा, प्रेम, सहिष्णुता, समता व सभी धर्मों के प्रति आदर की भावना विकसित हो।

इसी सिद्धांत को "राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 1986" की धुरी मानते हुए निम्नलिखित महत्वपूर्ण बिन्दुओं पर बल दिया गया है :

- 1- समानता के लिए शिक्षा बच्चों को शिक्षा के समान अवसर मिलें। इसमें महिलाएँ अनुसूचित जाति, जनजाति, विकलांग व निर्धन बच्चे शामिल हैं।
- 2- विभिन्न स्तरों पर शिक्षा का पुनर्विर्गठन :- इसमें 14 वर्ष तक बच्चों का नामांकन व + 2 स्तर पर व्यावसायिक शिक्षा का प्रावधान है।
- 3- तकनीकी व प्रबंध शिक्षा :- संगणक शिक्षा को स्कूल स्तर से प्रारंभ किया जाना।
- 4- शिक्षा व्यवस्था की कारगर बनाना :- शिक्षक पढ़ावें व बच्चे रुचिपूर्वक पढ़ें।
- 5- शिक्षा को विषय वस्तु व प्रक्रिया कोनसा मोड :- नैतिक मूल्यों, भाषा, पुस्तकालयों का विकास व व कार्यानुभव योजना सभी स्तरों पर आवश्यक मानी गई है। विज्ञान शिक्षा को सुदृढ़ बनाया गया। शारीरिक शिक्षा व खेलकूद को राष्ट्रव्यापी व्यवस्था का अंग बनाना। परीक्षा प्रणाली में सुधार।
- 6- शिक्षक समुदाय परिपूर्ण विश्वास व आस्था :- अच्छे कार्य को प्रोत्साहन।
- 7- शिक्षा का प्रबंध :- शिक्षा संस्थाओं में स्वायत्तता भी भावना पैदा करना। प्रबंध में अधिकाधिक महिलाओं को शामिल किया जाना।

8- **संसाधन :-** वित्तीय संसाधनों को अधिकाधिक जुटाना और परिव्यय को 6 प्रतिशत तक बढ़ाना ।

9- शिक्षा को वर्तमान व भविष्य के निर्माण का अनुपम साधन माने जाने के अपनी परम्पराओं में आस्था रखते हुए बौद्धिक व आध्यात्मिक उपलब्धियों को महत्व दिया जाना है ।

सामान्य शिक्षा में सुधार हेतु निम्नलिखित सुझाव दिए जाते हैं :

- 1- माध्यमिक स्तर तक वेदान्त व आध्यात्मिक शिक्षा पर बल देते हुए धार्मिक तोहार्द व सहिष्णुता बढ़ाई जाय ।
- 2- पश्चिमी राष्ट्रों का अंधा अनुकरण न करते हुए भारतीय परिवेश व जनबहुलता को दृष्टिगत रखते हुए कृषि व आधारित उद्योगों को पाठ्य क्रम में महत्व दिया जाय । कार्यक्रम योजनाओं के द्वारा कुटीर उद्योगों व स्वरोजगार पर बल दिया जाय ।
- 3- व्यावसायिक शिक्षा में योग्य शिक्षकों व वित्तीय संस्थाओं पर बल दिया जाय शिक्षकों को नियमित किया जाय ।
- 4- विज्ञान के छात्रों हेतु सामाजिक विज्ञान का अध्ययन अनिवार्य किया जाय ताकि उनमें सामाजिक सहिष्णुता विकसित हो सके । आध्यात्मिक अथवा भारतीय संस्कृति की शिक्षा का पाठों में समावेश हो ।
- 5- छात्र वृत्तियों केवल जाति आधारित न होकर परिवार की आर्थिक स्थिति पर भी आधारित हो ताकि प्रतिबल लेकिन गरीब छात्र पढ़ाई पूरी कर सकें ।
- 6- प्रधानाचार्य के अधिकार बढ़ाये जायें । शिक्षण संस्थानों को अधिक स्वायत्ता दी जाय । अच्छे शिक्षकों को पुरस्कृत करने के प्रावधान विद्यालय जनपद व मंडल स्तर पर बढ़ाए जायें ।
- 7- माध्यमिक स्तर तक बच्चों का पुस्तकीय बोझ कम किया जाय । बच्चे गृह कार्य व पुस्तक बोझ से खेल का समय नहीं पाते । उन्हें उनका बचपन लोटाया जाय ।
- 8- जनसंख्या शिक्षा बल :-
- 9- केवल शिक्षण अनुभव प्राधानाचार्यहेतु कसौटी न मानी जाय । अपितु प्रशासनिक क्षमता भी चयन के समय देखी जाय ।

- 10- शिक्षकों के वेतन में सुधार लाया जाए । ताकि प्रतिभावान युवक इस पेशे ओर आकर्षित हो सकें ।
- 11- प्रधानाचार्य व विभागीय अधिकारियों को खेलों की जानकारी व दिलचस्पी हो । प्रत्येक संस्था में शारीरिक शिक्षा शिक्षण क्रीड़ा स्थल व सामग्री का प्रावधान अनिवार्य रूप से हो ।
- 12- सभी विद्यालयों में एन.सी.सी. की शिक्षा प्रावधान हो ।
- 13- अंग्रेजी माध्यम पब्लिक स्कूल शनि - शनि बंद हों । विदेशी भाषा का माध्यम बच्चों को करके उन्हें हिन्दी माध्यम का बनाया जाए । विदेशी भाषा का माध्यम बच्चों को भारतीय संस्कृति वापरिवेश से अलग करता है ।
- 14- बढ़ती जनसंख्या के कारण द्वितीय प्रावधान राष्ट्रीय आय का 8% या उससे अधिक हो ।
- 15- पर्यावरणीय शिक्षा प्राथमिक स्तर से ही प्रारंभ की जाए । और माध्यमिक स्तर पर मौसम विज्ञान के पाठ भी रचे जाएँ ।
- 16- 1986 की शिक्षा नीति का पूरा क्रियान्वयन सुनिश्चित हो ।

राष्ट्र नवनिर्माण एवं विकास के लिए सर्वनिष्ठ सर्वसामान्य विद्यालय : दशा एवं दिशा — उत्तम स्कूल — बेबस बच्चे

—कैलाश चन्द्र नौटियाल

सूझ — बूझ :

शिक्षा हमारे समाज व देश के भविष्य की निर्माता । सभी को अपने बच्चों को अच्छी से अच्छी शिक्षा देने की होड़ । पर यह क्या प्रातः काल सुप्रभात में अशुभ समाचार ? सभी दुर्घटनाओं में पायः प्रमुख पब्लिक स्कूलों की बसे व बच्चे दुर्घटनाग्रस्त । दिनांक 18 नवम्बर को 28 बच्चों की स्कूल बस का यमुना नदी में गिर जाने से मौत । सभी समाचार पत्रों में सुखी खबर । सभी जगह दहशतपूर्ण वातावरण । मुख्यमंत्री, शिक्षामंत्री, परिवहन मंत्री, गृह मंत्री, पुलिस विभाग सभी अपनी-अपनी सूझ-बूझ के अनुसार सक्रिय । हादसे की पुनरावृत्ति न हो सभी चिन्तित । दुर्घटनाग्रस्त परिवारों को उचित मुआवजा । यातायात सवधी नियमों का दृढ़ता से पालन के लिए आश्वासन व निर्देश । अध्यापक का नौकरी से निलंबन । बसों में स्पीड नियंत्रणों की तुरन्त व्यवस्था । उच्चस्तरीय विभिन्न सगितियों का गठन । यही है हमारे बुद्धिजीवी समाज, हितैषी माता-पिता, शिक्षाविद्, प्रशासनिक अधिकारी, राजनीतिज्ञों की सोच व सूझ-बूझ जो कि समस्या की जड़ को न पहचान पाते हैं और न ही खुरच पाते हैं । जनाकोश को शांत करने, औपचारिकता पूर्ण करने के लिये तत्कालिक कदम पुरतः पुरतः सज्जत लिये जाते हैं । समस्याओं की व्यापकता रहती है ।

सुप्रसिद्ध शिक्षाविद् प्रोफेसर पासी गहरा अफसोस जताते हैं कि यह इनको क्यों समझ नहीं आता कि सड़क के उस पार व नदी के पार का विद्यालय क्यों अच्छा है और इस पार का विद्यालय क्यों विच्छिन्न बेकार, अध्यापक विहीन, आधारभूत शिक्षण सामग्री आदि से वंचित ? उस पार की मिट्टी, हवा, पानी में क्या गुण है कि वहां का विद्यालय सर्वगुण सम्पन्न और इस पार का विद्यालय निर्गुणों से भरपूर ? क्या हमने समाजवादी, समानता व समता पर आधारित, शोषण रहित, स्वाधीन भारत में इसी प्रकार की दोहरी शिक्षा व्यवस्था का सपना देखा था ? यह कैसी शिक्षा है कि एक ही शिक्षा तंत्र में विभिन्न मानदण्ड पर आधारित शिक्षा सुविधाएं और कुछ

आभार मैं प्रो. बालकृष्ण पासी, डॉ. अनिल सदगोपाल, डॉ. जय प्रकाश मित्तल, डॉ. हरचरण लाल शर्मा, प्रो. जवाहर लाल पान्डे, प्रो. उषा नायर, डॉ. मनोहर पाल, डॉ. रेड्डी के अमूल्य सुझावों व प्रोत्साहन के अनुगृहीत हूँ ।

तत्कालीन श्रेष्ठ विद्यालयों में दाखिले के लिए सभी की होड़ ? आज हमारे देश में अनगिनत प्रकार की राजकीय सस्थाएँ विद्यालय स्तर पर पनप रही हैं । जिनमें मुख्यतः सामान्य राजकीय विद्यालय, केन्द्रीय विद्यालय, नवोदय विद्यालय, नवयुग विद्यालय, सैनिक विद्यालय, राजकीय भाडल, आदर्श व सर्वोदय विद्यालय, आदि में राजकीय तंत्र के अन्तर्गत प्रति विद्यार्थी व्यय रु 300 (ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में) से रु 30,000 (नवोदय विद्यालय) तक है । पब्लिक स्कूलों में प्रति विद्यार्थी व्यय का तो कहना ही क्या ! कैसा लुभावना है आदर्श व पब्लिक स्कूलों का भकड़ जाल ? आजादी का बेमिसाल कगाल, नये समाज में बरबाद सार्वसामान्य स्कूल व आबाद पब्लिक स्कूल ।

क्या देश का उज्जवल भविष्य इन्हीं सामन्तवादी विषमताओं से ग्रस्त तंत्र पर आधारित होगा ? कौन सी विवशता है कि हमारे बुद्धिजीवी, शिक्षाविद्, प्रशासनिक सेवा के विशिष्ट अधिकारी, उच्च व मध्यमवर्गीय माता-पिता वर्तमान तंत्र के विकराल रूप के प्रति मौन हैं ? ये लोग क्यों शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में जानबूझ कर प्रतिदिन असमानता को बढ़ावा दे रहे हैं ? क्यों इन वर्गों की शिक्षा संबंधित कार्यक्रम व सुधार संगंधी सुझावों व सोच उनके आंसू पोछने की जगह, उनके अंततः सतत आसुओं में ही डुबोने की प्रक्रिया सक्रमक रूप धारण कर रही है ।

राष्ट्रीय नीति निर्देशों की अवहेलना :

क्यों खुले आम राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति सगंधी सकल्प (1968) तथा राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 1986 व 1992 में अकाट्य रूप से सर्वनिष्ठ सर्वसामान्य स्कूल प्रणाली (कामन स्कूल), जिसमें सभी के लिए जाति, धर्म, स्थान व लिंग आदि बिना भेदभाव के घर के आस पास विद्यालयों में दाखिले का अधिकार (नेबरहूड स्कूल), अच्छी व उत्तम शिक्षा के संकल्पों की निरंकुशता से अवहेलना की जा रही है ? हमारी आंखें, शिक्षा संबंधी आधारभूत आदर्शों के प्रति क्यों आत्मघाती रूप से बन्द हैं ?

भयावह दुष्परिणाम :

यह कैसी विचित्रता है कि सुबह-सुबह छ बजे प्रातः, छोटे-छोटे मासू बच्चों का सजधज कर, भूखे प्यासे, मुह लटकाये हुए, सड़क के मोड़ व किनारों व नस का बेसब्री से इंतजार । सुनत-सुनत हजारों नस झाड़धरो व कंडक उधते-उठते बस का स्टेरिंग सगाले, हडबडी में, एक स्टाप से दूसरे स्टाप तक बः

को उठाते हुए, निश्चित समय पर स्कूल पहुँचने की भगदड़। बसों का धुआधार बच्चों सहित सड़क को रौंदना। प्रति दिन करोड़ों रूपए का डीजल आदि का अपव्यय। शहरी भद्रजनों को सुबह-सुबह प्रदूषण रहित वातावरण में सुबह की सैर व सड़क पार करने में निराशा। यह सब है स्वतंत्र भारत की 50 वर्ष की आजादी की उपलब्धि जिसमें देशी से सगी के लिये सर्वनिष्ठ /सर्वसामान्य (कामन) स्कूल व घर के आस पास विद्यालयों में दाखिले के अधिकारों के आदर्शों को त्याग कर, विभिन्नताओं से भरपूर स्कूलों की व्यवस्था। जिसके परिणाम गयावह हैं।

1. बच्चों का अमानवीय रूप से बसों, साईकिल रिक्शों व तिपहिये स्कूटरों में उसा-ठस ठूसना, उनका निरंतर दुर्घटनाओं की ओर अग्रसर होना।
2. बच्चों का शारीरिक व मानसिक हास।
3. बच्चों व माता-पिता पर अनावश्यक मानसिक तनाव।
4. अनावश्यक प्रदूषित वातावरण का प्रसार।
5. गहरी शिक्षा।
6. शिक्षा का व्यापारीकरण व शिक्षा के नाम पर खुलकर लूट खसोट।
7. सगी बच्चों के लिये निशुल्क अनिवार्य शिक्षा का संवैधानिक प्रावधान की अवहेलना।
8. बच्चों का पूर्व प्राथमिक व प्राथमिक कक्षा एक में अनैतिक परीक्षा आधारित दाखिल।
9. समाज का घोर विषमता की ओर अग्रसर होना और अन्ततः विषपूर्ण समाज की स्थापना।

आशा : सर्वनिष्ठ सर्वसामान्य स्कूल :

वास्तव में हमारा समृद्ध, सत्ताधारी व माध्यम वर्ग हर कीमत पर अपनी व अपने बच्चों के लिए अलग पहचान व विशिष्टता बनाये रखना चाहता है। इसके लिये अंततः चाहे पूरे देश, व समाज व उसके अपने बच्चों को असह्य कीमत ही क्यों न चुकाना पड़े। इस प्रक्रिया में दोहरी शिक्षा प्रणाली विशेषतः सहायक है। इस वर्ग शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में, एक अक्षम्य अपराधी है। वह पूर्णतः हमारे संविधान का व राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति व सकल्यों का व पंचवर्षीय योजनाओं के प्रावधानों का हन्ता है। यह वर्ग अपने बच्चों को विशिष्ट विद्यालयों, तथाकथित पब्लिक स्कूलों में भेजता है, जहाँ अच्छे भवन, अच्छे अध्यापक, उत्तम व आधुनिक शिक्षण सामग्री व निश्चित रूप

से पढाई होती है। यह वर्ग जन साधारण के लिए राजकीय सामान्य विद्यालयों का आधुनिकीकरण व उनको तुलनात्मक बनाने के लिये स्वाभाविक रूप से उदासीन व निष्कप है। इसकी कथनी व करनी में निरन्तर बढ़ता हुआ अन्तर, अतः राष्ट्रीय व इसी वर्ग के लिए घातक है।

इस वर्ग की सोच व सूझ-बूझ में परिवर्तन देश के पुनर्स्थान व विकास के लिए नितात आवश्यक है। आज भी यदि हम सर्वनिष्ठ सर्वसामान्य शिक्षा प्रणाली (कामन स्कूल) विद्यार्थियों का घर के समीप तुलनात्मक स्कूलों में प्रवेश का अधिकार (नेवरहुड विद्यालय) की नीति को अपनाएं तो सामंतवादी वर्तमान शिक्षा का घिनौना व्यापारिकरण, बाजारीकरण, वर्ग आधारित अनैतिक रूप से विद्यार्थियों का विभाजन, राजकीय विद्यालयों का निरन्तर गिरता स्तर, नगरों में यातायात व परिवहन साधनों पर बढ़ता बोझ, सुबह-सुबह वाहनो द्वारा प्रदूषण की समस्या आदि का निराकरण हो सकता है। पूर्णतः नेवरहुड स्कूल की अवधारणा ही इस समस्या का एक मात्र निदान है। ऐसा करके हम असाहस बच्चों व देश-वासियों को अनवश्यक शारीरिक, मानसिक व वित्तीय बढती हुई दुर्गति से बचा सकते हैं, और शिक्षा का राष्ट्रीय एकता, परस्पर सहयोग, समाजिक सदभाव, समता, समानता व विकास का सशक्त माध्यम की कल्पना जो राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा आयोग (1964-66) व राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (1986) ने की थी, को साकार कर सकते हैं।

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— पी.डी. पाण्डेय

26 जनवरी 1950 से भारतीय संविधान की व्यवस्थाओं के लागू होने के फलस्वरूप "समानता" के मूल - अधिकार की मान्यता को स्वीकार कर लिया गया । सामाजिक समानता एवं सामाजिकन्याय की स्थापना के लिए तत्पु प्रयास किए गए । समाज में व्याप्त असमानताओं और दूरियों को कम करने हेतु योजनाबद्ध तरीके से कार्य हुए । सामाजिक एवं आर्थिक समस्याओं के निदान के लिए शिक्षा की भूमिका को स्वीकार दिया गया । राज्य के नीति निर्देशक तत्वों में भी यह संकल्प व्यक्त किया गया कि राज्य 6 से 14 वर्ष के सभी बालक-बालिकाओं की शिक्षा के लिए शिक्षा का लोकव्यापीकरण करेगा । इस दिशा में प्रयास भी किए गए किन्तु इसके बावजूद आज भी देश की लगभग आधी आबादी निरक्षर है ।

1968 में शिक्षा आयोग ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में इस दुःखद स्थिति के अनेक कारकों को उत्तरदायी ठहराया तथा शिक्षा में समानता और समानता के लिए शिक्षा हेतु अनेक अनुशासार् की । उनमें एक प्रमुख अनुशास सामान्य विद्यालय पद्धति की स्थापना करने के संबंध में थी । ताकि समाज में विभेद समाप्त कर सामाजिक और आर्थिक समानता को प्रतिस्थापित करने के लिए सामान्य विद्यालयीन पद्धति की व्यवस्था पूरे देश में की जाए और सभी के लिए एक जैसे विद्यालय हों तथा स्कूल जोने योग्य सभी बच्चों को अनिवार्य रूप से इन विद्यालयों में प्रवेश दिलाया जाए । ऐसे सामान्य विद्यालयों में समाज के सबसे नीचे स्तर से लेकर समाज के सबसे उच्च स्तर तक के लोगों के बच्चे साथ साथ पढ़ें । सभी की एक जैसी पोशाकें हों तथा एक जैसा पाठ्यक्रम, पाठ्य सामग्री, पाठ्य विषय एवं पाठ्य पुस्तकें हों । सभी विद्यालयों को लगभग समान भौतिक सुविधाएँ ही नहीं अपितु मानव एवं आर्थिक संसाधन व शैक्षिक परिवेश भी समान रूप से उपलब्ध हों । अध्ययन के लिए जो विषय चुने और अनुसूचित किए जाएँ उनकी पाठ्यवस्तु एवं न्यूनतम सीखने का स्तर सामान्य हो । उदाहरणार्थ पठन-पाठन हेतु भौतिक पर्यावरण सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक पर्यावरण की पठन सामग्री एक जैसी हो । सभी अध्ययनरत बालक-बालिकाओं को उनकी मातृभाषा के अलावा कोई एक राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर सर्वमान्य भाषा का समान रूप से सभी को उच्च ज्ञान कराया

जाए । माध्यमिक स्तर से लेकर उच्चतर माध्यमिक स्तर तक वैकल्पिक रूप से एक और भाषा - तृतीय भाषा के रूप में सभी बालक बालिकाओं को सिखाया जाए । इन सभी विषयों का पाठ्यक्रम, पाठ्यवस्तु एवं शैक्षिक व्यवस्था राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर समान हो, किन्तु स्थानीय आवश्यकताओं, सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक पर्यावरण का ध्यान रखते हुए एक समान रूप से निर्धारित सीमा तक, स्थानीय पर्यावरण ज्ञान से संबंधित बातों के समावेश हेतु कृषिलेखन की नीति का अनुसरण किया जाए ताकि बालक-बालिकाएँ समाज में समायोजन करने में समर्थ बनें ।

1986 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के अंतर्गत यह स्वीकार किया कि देश की विद्यालयीन शिक्षा में अनेक कमियाँ हैं तथा यह उच्च शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान के लिए कमजोर कड़ी साबित हो रही है । शैक्षिक स्तर न्यून है तथा विद्यालय शिक्षक एवं साधन विहीन है । जोशिक्षक उपलब्ध हैं वे वर्तमान स्थिति में शिक्षा की चुनौतियों से निबटने में समर्थ नहीं हैं । उनका ज्ञान और शिक्षा पद्धतियाँ पिछड़ी हुई हैं । लोकव्यापीकरण एवं विद्यालयों के अभाव में सामान्यजन शिक्षा के अवसरों से वंचित हैं । समाज का संपन्न वर्ग अपने धन बल के सहारे पब्लिक स्कूलों के माध्यम से अच्छी से अच्छी शिक्षा प्राप्त कर, समाज में राजनीति, व्यवसाय, अर्थ तंत्र एवं प्रशासन तंत्र पर अपना कब्जा बरकरार रखते हुए उसमें निरंतर पूर्ति कर रहा है जिसके परिणामस्वरूप सामाजिक और आर्थिक दूरियों की चौड़ाई और बढ़ गई है तथा सामाजिक और आर्थिक समानता के स्थान पर सामाजिक और आर्थिक विषमता दिन प्रति दिन बढ़ी है और वर्ग संघर्ष तथा समाज में विभेदकारी शक्तियाँ सक्रिय हो रही हैं । आज देश में 95 करोड़ में से लगभग 40 करोड़ लोग गरीबी रेखा के नीचे जीवन बिताने के लिए अभिशप्त हैं । इन सबका परिणाम यह हो रहा है कि समाज में कटुता, ईर्ष्या, द्वेष, टकराव और संघर्ष के भाव उत्पन्न हो रहे हैं । क्षेत्रीयता, भाषावाद, जातिवाद और धार्मिक कट्टरता की भावनाएँ तिर उठा रही हैं । धर्म, वर्ण और जाति व्यवस्था, समाज को अपने मूल उद्देश्य जोड़ने के स्थान पर "तोड़ने" में क्रियाशील है । समाज विघटन के कगार पर खड़ा है । राष्ट्रीय एकता के मार्ग में अनेक बाधाएँ आ रही हैं ।

"विविधता है एकता" की भारतीय संस्कृति की मूलभूत भावना तिरहीहित हो रही । यह सब हमारी शिक्षा व्याप्त विषमताओं, शिक्षा के लोक व्यापीकरण के अभाव और सामान्य विद्यालयीन शिक्षा पद्धति

को मूर्तरूप देने के फलस्वरूप उत्पन्न हुई है ।

1986 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति की कार्य योजना के अंतर्गत शिक्षा के लोक व्यापीकरण की महती आवश्यकता की पूरी तरह स्वीकार किया गया । तथा इसे पूर्णरूप देने के लिए कारगर कदम उठाए गए । " आपरेशन ब्लैक बोर्ड " साक्षरता अभियान, स्कूल चलो कार्यक्रम चलाए गए । सभी वर्ग के बच्चों की शिक्षा के लिए शिक्षा की व्यवस्था करने के यत्न किए गए । सामान्य विद्यालय पद्धति की भावनाओं के अनुरूप भी कदम उठाए गए तथा ग्रामीण प्रतिभाओं की शिक्षा के उपयुक्त अवसर प्रदान करने के उद्देश्य से नवोदय विद्यालय प्रारंभ किए गए । दलित एवं अल्प-संख्यक वर्ग की शिक्षा हेतु तथा साधन विहीन बालकों की शिक्षा हेतु समुचित व्यवस्था की गई । शिक्षा के लोक व्यापीकरण के लिए स्वेच्छक संस्थाओं को भी प्रोत्साहित किया गया । साक्षरता अभियान के माध्यम से निरक्षरता दूर करने के प्रयास किए गए जो आज भी निरंतर हैं । सभी को समान रूप से शिक्षा प्रदान करने हेतु सामान्य विद्यालयीन पद्धति लागू करने के प्रयास की दिशा में कदम उठाए गए किन्तु संविधान के प्रावधानों तथा शिक्षा व संस्कृति के मूलाधिकारों के कारण "पब्लिक स्कूल" विशिष्ट साधन संपन्न विद्यालय व्यवस्था को अभी बदलना संभव नहीं हो पा रहा है । अतः विद्यमान की स्थिति यथावत बनी हुई है । यद्यपि राष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण परिषद् इस दिशा में पहल कर रही है तथा जनभावना भी सामान्य विद्यालय पद्धति अपनाने हेतु प्रबल हो रही है । पर वर्तमान कानूनी एवं वैधानिक व्यवस्थाओं में परिवर्तन लाए बिना " सामान्य विद्यालय पद्धति " की अवधारणा को मूर्तरूप दिया जाना संभव नहीं है । वर्तमान आवश्यकताओं व विश्वव्यापी ज्ञान के विस्फोट को ध्यान में रखते हुए पूर्व प्राथमिक स्तर से 30 मा. वि. स्तर तक " सामान्य विद्यालय पद्धति " अपनाने के लिए जो संगोष्ठी एवं परिचर्चा राष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण परिषद् आयोजित कर रही है वह सही दिशा में सकारात्मक समाधान की अच्छी पहल है । पर इस संबंध में यह ध्यान रखा जाना भी अपेक्षित है कि सर्वप्रथम जब तक शिक्षा पाने का सभी अधिकारी सुनिश्चित नहीं किया जाता तब तक कोई समाधान खोज पाना कैसे संभव है ? यह गंभीर और विचारणीय है ।

जब तक म.प्र. राज्य का प्रश्न है, यह पिछड़ा एवं अनुसूचित जन जातीय बाहुल्य प्रदेश है । यहाँ सामान्य विद्यालय पद्धति शैक्षिक व्यवस्था नितांत आवश्यक है । वैसे यहाँ उक्त अवधारणा के अनुरूप सभी विद्यालयों में सामान्य पाठ्यक्रम, समान पाठ्यक्रम वस्तु और समान पाठ्यपुस्तकों का प्रचलन है । साथ ही माध्यमिक शिक्षा मण्डल म.प्र. द्वारा समान मूल्यांकन की व्यवस्था है । प्रदेश एवं अध्ययन अध्यापन हेतु भी प्रदेश के सभी विद्यालयों के लिए समान नियम व सुविधाओं की व्यवस्था की गई है जिसके अच्छे परिणाम निकले हैं । अतः सभी के लिए एक विद्यालय सामान्य विद्यालयीन पद्धति की व्यवस्था सामाजिक समानता व न्याय के लिए अपरिहार्य है सभी समता मूलक समाज की स्थापना संभव है । हाँ इस तार तम्य में यह बात अवश्य ध्यान में रखनी होगी कि सामान्य विद्यालय के साथ साथ प्रतिभावान बालकों के लिए विशिष्ट विद्यालयों की भी व्यवस्था करनी होगी जिनका आधारभूत सिद्धांत वर्ग विभेद आर्थिक संपन्नता के स्थान पर प्रतिभा ही हो ।

— सरला राजपूत

बीसवीं सदी के अंत तथा भारतीय स्वाधीनता के 50वें वर्ष में एक महत्वपूर्ण सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व का मतला देश के समक्ष मुंह खोले खड़ा है। यह है शिक्षा से संबंधित। आज देश की लोकतंत्रीय व्यवस्था में जब सभी को समान रूप से शिक्षा प्राप्त करने का अधिकार है तो विद्यालयीन व्यवस्था किस प्रकार की हो। यह एक जटिल प्रश्न शिक्षा के सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व की पुच्छभूमि से संलग्न है। प्राचीन भारत में जब गुरुकुल व्यवस्था थी तब शिक्षा भी समाज के कुछ वर्गों विशेष रूप से शासक वर्ग के परिवार तक ही सीमित थी परन्तु आधुनिक एवं स्वतंत्र भारत में स्थिति बहुत बदल गई है। अब यह "कलात" से उठ कर "मात" तक फैल गई है अर्थात् इसका विस्तार एक वर्ग से निकल कर जन मानस तक बढ़ गया है। इस स्थिति का ब्रेय देश के वर्तमान संविधान की एक मुख्य धारा को जाता है। यह धारा भी लोकतंत्रीय शासन प्रणाली के परिप्रेक्ष्य में प्रस्तुत की गई है। लोकतंत्रीय व्यवस्था के संचालन के लिये आवश्यक है कि सभी नागरिकों की शासन में भागीदारी हो और उनकी सहभागिता के लिये आवश्यक है कि नागरिक उत्तरदायी एवं जागरूक हों। लोकतंत्र की इस आवश्यकता की पूर्ति के लिये जागरूक नागरिकों का निर्माण तो एक संवेदनशील एवं आवश्यकता परक शिक्षा ही कर सकती है। इस प्रकार शिक्षा का एक उद्देश्य शिक्षित निर्वाचक गण, संक्षम एवं त्यागी नेतृत्व का सृजन करना है तथा उन अति आवश्यक मूल्यों जैसे आत्म संयम, सहनशीलता, आपसी भाई चारा आदि का विकास करना है जिससे लोकतंत्र केवल एक शासन प्रणाली बन कर न रह जाये बल्कि एक जीवन प्रणाली भी बन जाये। यह कोठारी कमीशन की अभिव्यक्ति है। इसी संदर्भ में दूसरी आवश्यकता समाज की है। "यहाँ पर भी शिक्षा व्यवस्था के ऊपर उत्तरदायित्व है कि वह एक ऐसे समाज की स्थापना के निर्माण में योगदान दे जो भिन्न सामाजिक वर्गों तथा समूहों को एक जुट करे और उनमें समानता तथा स्वीकृत होने की भावना को विकसित करे जिससे एक समान एवं समन्वित समाज का निर्माण हो सके"। कोठारी कमीशन की शिक्षा व्यवस्था से यह भी अपेक्षा है। समाज के अतिरिक्त शिक्षार्थियों की अपेक्षाएँ हैं जो उनके व्यक्तित्व के सर्वांगीण विकास से लेकर उनके जीवन में एक सफल व्यक्ति होने तक जुड़ी है।

इसमें उस व्यक्ति को एक परिवार के सदस्य, एक व्यवसायिक संस्था के सदस्य होने के नाते जो जिम्मेदारियाँ निभानी है उनके अनुरूप उसमें क्षमता एवं कुशलता विकसित हो सके तो यह काम भी शिक्षा व्यवस्था को ही करना है। इन सभी संदर्भों में यह देखना है कि क्या आज 1997 में हमारी शिक्षा व्यवस्था इन उपरिवर्णित उत्तरदायित्वों को निभा पाने में समर्थ है ?

प्रचलित शिक्षा व्यवस्था जिसमें प्राइवेट पब्लिक स्कूल तथा सरकारी स्कूल की द्वैध व्यवस्था है जहाँ मौलिक सुविधाओं तथा पाठ्यक्रम आदि की अतमानता इस प्रकार से नियोजित की गई है जिससे समाज में दोहरी शिक्षा प्रणाली का आभास होता है। यह व्यवस्था शिक्षा के माध्यम से सामाजिक असंगत को प्रोत्साहित कर रही है तथा विभिन्न वर्गों के मध्य दूरी पैदा करने की एक चौड़ी खाई का काम कर रही है। इस प्रकार कुल मिलाकर विषमताओं को जन्म देने वाली बहुत बड़ी बुराई के रूप में उभर गई है। इस बुराई को दस्त करने के लिये तथा शिक्षा व्यवस्था को एक सशक्त उपकरण के रूप में विकसित करने के लिये कोठारी कमीशन ने शिक्षा की समान विधायीन व्यवस्था की संस्तुति की है जो सामाजिक, राष्ट्रीय एकता को बढ़ावा दे सके तथा राष्ट्रीय विकास में कारगर हो सके। कोठारी कमीशन की संस्तुति जो 1966 में की गई थी उसके तीन दशक बीत चुके हैं। 1966 के बाद 1986 में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति भी अपनी घोषणा कर चुकी यह घोषणा थी कि सामाजिक सामंजस्य तथा राष्ट्रीय एकता को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिये कायम स्कूल व्यवस्था अंगीकार की जाये तथा उसे स्थापित करने के लिये प्रभावी कदम उठाये जायें। दुर्भाग्यवश इस घोषणा के भी 10 वर्ष बीत चुके हैं परन्तु कोठारी कमीशन की रपट में उल्लिखित उस समय प्रचलित शिक्षा व्यवस्था एवं तत्जनित दुर्दशा आज भी ज्यों की त्यों है साथ ही उस समय से शिक्षा अपने उन उद्देश्यों से पूरी तरह दूर होती जा रही है जिसे लक्ष्य बना कर शिक्षा की नीति तय की जाती है। वास्तव में यह एक वर्ग विशेष जो कि आर्थिक रूप से सक्षम है प्रशासनिक सेवाओं में रत अच्छी आय वाले या राजनैतिक जिन्का आर्थिक एवं प्रशासनिक सभी क्षेत्रों पर दबदबा है और वे उद्योग समूहों के अधिपति जिनकी आय ही आय है उन्हीं के बच्चों की आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिये नियोजित है। ग्रेणी 2, 3, एवं 4 के कर्मचारी, ग्रामिक वर्ग

तथा अन्य पिछड़े जाति के लोग इन सुविधाओं के बारे में जान कर भी उनका लाभ नहीं उठा सकते । विडम्बना यह है कि सभी प्रशासकीय वर्ग एवं राजनेता तथा उच्च स्तरीय अकादमिक ही नीतिगत निर्णयों में समान स्कूल की बात करते हैं परन्तु क्रियान्वित रूप में लाने के लिये कभी कोई कदम नहीं उठाना चाहते क्योंकि उनका सरकारी विद्यालयों के शिक्षा के स्तर पर विश्वास नहीं है इसलिये वे स्वयं उसकी सहभागिता से दूर रहते हैं । इस प्रकार शिक्षा आर्थिक एवं बौद्धिक बुद्धिजीवियों की सांस्कृतिक पूंजी बन गई है तथा ये श्रेष्ठ जनों के द्वारा कठपुतली की भाँति नचाई जा रही है । सम्भवतः यही एक कारण है कि इतने अधिक प्रयासों के बावजूद देश सर्वव्यापी शिक्षा के प्रसार के लक्ष्य को नहीं छू पा रहा रहा है ।

सर्व प्रथम कामन स्कूल की आवश्यकता आवश्यक है । समान विद्यालयीन व्यवस्था का संभवतः अर्थ है - सभी विद्यालयों की समान सुविधाएँ समान शिक्षक, श्रयोग्यता, वेतन, सुविधाओं से पूर्ण, यहाँ सभी विद्यार्थियों को प्रवेश के समान अवसर, समान फीस, समान पाठ्यक्रम, समान परीक्षा प्रणाली एवं समान सर्टिफिकेट प्राप्त हो सके । यदि इस धारणा को सही माना जाय तथा सही अर्थों में क्रियान्वित करना हो तो इकहरी शिक्षा व्यवस्था को ही नियोजित करना पड़ेगा जिसमें प्राइवेट पब्लिक स्कूल जो अच्छी शिक्षा एवं बुद्धिजीवियों के स्तर, उनके मान के अनुरूप की शिक्षा देने का दम भरते हैं उसे पूरी तरह निकालना पड़ेगा । इससे न केवल विषमता घन धूसरित होगी बल्कि शिक्षा का जो अनापसनाप व्यवसायीकरण हो रहा है समाज को उसकी त्रासदी से भी मुक्ति मिलेगी । आज समाज में स्तरीय एवं गुणवत्तापूर्ण शिक्षा के लिये जो होड़ लगी है उसकी वजह से व्यक्ति अपनी आय का प्रमुख हिस्सा बच्चों की शिक्षा पर खर्च करना चाहता है भले ही खाना, कपड़ा एवं मकान उसकी दूसरी श्रेणी की आवश्यकताओं में पहुँच जायें । क्या वास्तव में शिक्षा के लिये इतनी बड़ी कीमत चुकाने की आवश्यकता है । यह यह चिन्तन का विषय है । पर यह विचार मंथन भी तभी उचित होगा जब देश के समस्त सामाजिक समानता की स्थापना की प्रेरणा हो तथा राजनैतिक इच्छा हो अन्यथा यह समान विद्यालयीन व्यवस्था की धारणा एक उपहास

के विषय के अतिरिक्त कुछ नहीं रह जाती । जहाँ बाकी बहस, विचार विमर्श के लिये स्थान शेष नहीं बचता और न ही सार्थकता रह जाती है । इसकी सार्थकता के लिए आवश्यक है कि देश के शिक्षाविद शिक्षा की नीति का आधार स्तंभ मजबूती से स्थापित करें तथा क्रियान्वयन पर शीघ्रताशीघ्र कदम बढ़ायें ।

---हरचरण लाल शर्मा

कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम के संबंध में राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 1968 निदेशन निम्न प्रकार हैं :

" सामाजिक जुड़ाव एवं राष्ट्रीय एकजुटता को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए शिक्षा आयोग द्वारा की गई सिफारिश के अनुसार सार्वजनिक स्कूल प्रणाली अपनाई जानी चाहिए । आम स्कूलों में शिक्षा के स्तर को सुधारने के लिए प्रयास किए जाने चाहिए । पब्लिक स्कूलों जैसे सभी विशेष स्कूलों के लिए जरूरी होना चाहिए कि वे योग्यता के आधार पर विद्यार्थियों को प्रवेश दें और सामाजिक वर्गों का विखराव रोकने के लिए निर्धारित अनुपात में छात्रवृत्तियाँ प्रदान करें । "

अभी तक कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम के लिए निर्धारित नीति को बांँठित कार्यरूप नहीं दिया जा सका । शायद कुछ ऐसे कारण रहे हैं जिनको दूर करने के प्रयासों में कमी रह गई । या जो कारण हम जानते हैं, वे कारण ही नहीं हैं, कुछ और कारण हैं । इन कारणों पर गंभीर एवं गहन परिचर्चा की आवश्यकता है ।

साक्षरता का विकास :— भारतीय परिपेक्ष्य में साक्षरता के विकास स्कूल से सीधा संबंध है । स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के बाद साक्षरता की दर लगभग तीन गुनी हो गई है । यह 1951 में 15.33 प्रतिशत और अधिक आयु की जनसंख्या के लिए 18.33 प्रतिशत थी जो 1991 में 72.52 प्रतिशत और अधिक आयु की जनसंख्या के लिए 75.05 प्रतिशत हो गई । स्त्री साक्षरता भी 8.86 प्रतिशत 1951 से बढ़कर 39.29 प्रतिशत 1991 गयी । उन्नी अक्षरों में जनसंख्या में भी लगभग द्वाइ गुनी वृद्धि हो गई । प्राइमरी या प्राथमिक विद्यालयों की संख्या 1951 में 2 लाख 9 हजार से बढ़कर 1992 में 5 लाख 65 हजार हो गई, तब अपर प्राइमरी विद्यालयों की संख्या जो 13.500 से अधिक थी, वह अब बढ़कर एक लाख 52 हजार हो गई है । अब गाँवों में रहने वाले 95 प्रतिशत बच्चों को प्राथमिक विद्यालय तक जाने के लिए एक किलोमीटर से अधिक नहीं चलना पड़ता । इस संदर्भ में निम्नलिखित तालिका देखी जा सकती है :

तालिका
भारत में साक्षरता की दरें प्रतिशत

वर्ष	आयुवर्ग	कुल व्यक्ति	पुरुष	स्त्रियाँ	ग्रामीण	नगरीय
1901 x	पूर्ण जनसंख्या	5.39	9.9.83	0.60	xx	xx
1911 x	पूर्ण जनसंख्या	5.92	10.56	1.05	xx	xx
1921 x	पूर्ण जनसंख्या	7.16	12.21	1.81	xx	xx
1931 x	पूर्ण जनसंख्या	9.50	15.23	2.93	xx	xx
1941 x	पूर्ण जनसंख्या	16.10	24.90	7.30	xx	xx

1951	5 वर्ष या अधिक	18.33	27.16	8.86	12.10	34.50
1961	5 वर्ष या अधिक	28.30	40.39	15.33	22.46	56.59
1971	5 वर्ष या अधिक	34.45	45.95	21.97	27.89	60.22
1981	7 वर्ष या अधिक	43.67	56.50	29.50	36.09	67.34
1991	7 वर्ष या अधिक	52.21	64.13	39.29	44.69	73.09

× अविभाजित भारत के लिए

× आँकड़े उपलब्ध नहीं ।

स्त्रोत: एजुकेशन फार आल - ए ग्राफिक प्रोजेक्टेड , नीपा , 1993 पृष्ठ -22

साक्षरता में विफलता का श्रेय स्कूल को ही जाता है । एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार स्कूल जाने वाले बच्चों की संख्या 21 करोड़ है । इसमें से 9 करोड़

80 लाख को स्कूल में नामांकित बताया जाता है । स्कूल में पढ़ रहे हैं ।

इनमें से आधे बच्चे कक्षा आठ तक पहुँचते-पहुँचते स्कूल छोड़ देते हैं । इस प्रकार से लगभग पाँच करोड़ पढ़ाई के लिए नौवीं, दसवीं कक्षा में पढ़ने जाते हैं । चिन्ता का विषय है कि 16 करोड़ के लगभग बच्चे स्कूल से बाहर हैं । इन बच्चों को स्कूल में पढ़ना चाहिए । इन 16 करोड़ बालक-बालिकाओं की शिक्षा न हो पाना भी तो स्कूल का ही दोष है । शहरी क्षेत्र की बात तो छोड़ें, ग्रामीण जगत में भी गरीबी आड़े नहीं आ रही । बच्चों को पढ़ाने के लिए , शहर में और गाँव में आज प्रत्येक मा-बाप जागरूक हैं अपने बच्चों की पढ़ाई के लिए ।

परन्तु जो जैसे-स्कूल में पढ़ाना चाहता है , वैसे-स्कूल में दाखिला मिलता नहीं है । जो स्कूल मौजूद हैं, उसमें वह अपने बच्चे को बढाना चाहता नहीं है । दृन्द वहीं से प्रारंभ हो जाता है और इस दृन्द का समाधान कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम में ही है । क्या कॉमन हो सकता है ? यदि हिन्दी भाषा में अर्थांतर ।

रूपांतर / पर्यायवाची देखें तो सार्वजनिक स्कूल प्रणाली शब्द उपर उल्लिखित हैं ।

सार्वजनिक का अर्थ है सबके लिए सुलभ । हमारे स्कूल क्या इस सबके लिए ,

हमारी इच्छानुसार सुलभ हैं ? उदासीकरण तथा आर्थिक युग में, कुछ न कुछ

तो कामन होना चाहिए । वे रोक टोक सबका अधिकार हो, ऐसी पद्धति को

सार्वजनिक कहा जा सकता है । अस्तु गंभीर चर्चा के लिए, कामन स्कूल सिस्टम के पर्यायवाची शब्दों पर संक्षेप में चर्चा करना प्रासंगिक लगता है ।

अर्थ-पर्यायवाची

कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम में तीन शब्द हैं । " कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम " पर विचार लिए इन तीनों शब्दों के अर्थ जानना प्रासंगिक है । हिन्दी में इसका पर्यायवाची देने के लिए इसमें आर तीनों शब्दों के अर्थ समझना भी आवश्यक है ।

कॉमन शब्द का अर्थ है :	सामान्य उभयनिष्ठ §	§
	सर्वनिष्ठ §	§ समान, सार्वजनिक
	लोक, साधारण	
स्कूल के अर्थ है :	स्कूल विद्यालय, शाळा	
सिस्टम के अर्थ है :	तंत्र, प्रणाली §	
	योजना , व्यवस्था , क्रम, समुदाय, निकाय, संघ	
	§	§ पद्धति

अतः हिन्दी में कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम के लिए सार्वजनिक स्कूल प्रणाली सर्वनिष्ठ विद्यालय तंत्र, लोक विद्यालय, व्यवस्था आदि कई हो सकती हैं । कौन सा पर्यायवाची माना जाए, यह बिन्दु भी चर्चा का गंभीर विषय होना चाहिए । इसके पीछे दर्शन यही है कि भारतीय शिक्षा पद्धति के विकास के लिए भारतीय भाषा की शब्दावली होनी चाहिए अन्यथा " हरि अनेक हरि कथा अनन्ता " वाली बात वरितार्थ होती है । मातृभाषा में जब चिंतन प्रक्रिया प्रारंभ हो ~~ब्रह्म~~भीजाती है तब शब्द का अर्थ चिंतन को प्रभावित करता है । एनवाइरलमेंट स्टडीज, नोनफार्मल एजुकेशन के पर्यायवाची शब्दों तथा उनके अर्थों ने इन विषयों को उपयुक्त धारणाओं के विकास में बाधाएँ उत्पन्न की हैं । अंग्रेजी भाषा के नोनफार्मल के लिए कई शब्द सरकारी तौर पर हैं, अनौपचारिक न - औपचारिक , औपचारिकतर, गैर औपचारिक चल रहे हैं । एनवाइसमेंटल के लिए, पर्यावरण परिवेश , परिस्थिति आदि कई शब्द हैं । कई शब्दों से सर्वमान्य धारणा के समुचित विकास में बाधा पड़ती है । दर्शन के स्तर पर सकारात्मकता मान भी हैं पर क्रियान्वयन में तो व्यावहारिक बाधाएँ आती हैं । कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम की अवधारणा के लिए उपयुक्त पर्यायवाची भी चाहिए । अतः, पर्यायवाची के जयन निमित्त चर्चा से बचने के इस लेख में शीर्षक " कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम " ही रखा है ।

कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम

अपने देश के लिए कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम होना चाहिए अथवा नहीं ? यदि उत्साह हॉ में होतो प्रश्न किया जा सकता है क्यों? और यदि "न" हो तो भी प्रश्न किया जा सकता है क्यों ? कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम के लिए इस "हॉ" और "न" की चर्चा से किसी सत्य के उजागर होने की अपेक्षा की जा सकती है ।

दर्शन।त्मक विवेचन

हम भारतवासी हैं । भारतीयता हमारी धरोहर है । देश की एकता और अखंडता अधुन रहे, इस हेतु देश के लिए एक " कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम" होना अनिवार्य है । प्रजातांत्रिक समतावादी दर्शन के क्रियान्वयन की निरंतरता के लिए कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम होना जरूरी है । हमारी संस्कृति के विकास के लिए कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम जरूरी है । भारतीय संस्कारों के अंकुरण और पल्लवन के लिए स्कूलिंग की अनिवार्यता है अतः स्कूलिंग सर्वनिष्ठता आवश्यक है भिन्नताओं को समाप्त नहीं किया जा सकता परन्तु भिन्नताओं में एक प्रकार की सर्वनिष्ठता लाई जा सकती है । यदि कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम की एक सर्वमान्य अवधारणा का विकास भी नहीं हो पाता और उसके व्यावहारिक क्रियान्वयन की व्यवस्था नहीं हो पाती तो परिणामों की कल्पना वेदनात्मक है ।

ऐतिहासिक परिपेक्ष्य

1964-66 के शिक्षा आयोग ने कॉमन स्कूल आफ पब्लिक एजुकेशन की अवधारणा प्रस्तुत की थी , और 20 वर्षों की अवधि में शनैः- शनैः कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम की अवधारणा के क्रियान्वयन की आशा की थी । शिक्षा आयोग की सिफारिशें 1968 में मान ली गई थी अतः 1968 तक कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम लागू हो जाना चाहिए था, पर 1997 तक कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम सही अर्थों में लागू नहीं हो पाया । कहीं न कहीं कोई कूट जरूर रही है जिससे हम अपने बच्चों को पूरा नहीं कर पाते । हमारे संकल्पों की स्थितियों को बढ़ती रहती हैं

लगभग तीन वर्षों की अवधि बीतने पर भी कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम सही अर्थों में लागू नहीं हो पाया इससे निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि अवधारणा ठीक नहीं थी या उसके क्रियान्वयन की योजना ठीक नहीं रही । कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम की अवधारणा के क्रियान्वयन निमित्त बनाई गई नीतियाँ व्यावहारिक पक्ष में खरी नहीं उतरी । नीति की सफलता का सूचक होता है नीति का व्यावहारिक जगत में क्रियान्वयन ।

कोठारी कमीशन के कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम आफ पब्लिक एजुकेशन की अवधारणा प्रस्तुत की थी जिसमें किसी भी प्रकार के भेदभाव किए बिना सभी बच्चों को स्कूल में पढ़ने के लिए अवसर मिलें । इस हेतु कमीशन ने अन्य कई प्रकार की अवधारणाओं के साथ-साथ "नेवरहुड स्कूल" की संकल्पना भी प्रस्तुत की थी ।

64-66 के अनुसार सभी बच्चों को शिक्षा उनके पास के स्कूल में मुलभूत हो, स्कूलों का स्टैंडर्ड एक समान हो । द्यूशन फीस भी न ली जाए । स्कूलों को कुछ

इस तरह से विकसित किया जाए कि औसत दर्जे के आर्थिक स्तर वाले माँ-बाप बहुत कीमती स्कूलों में अपने बच्चों को भेजना न चाहें, आदि । यहाँ पर पब्लिक शब्द की और ध्यान देना आवश्यक लगता है । पब्लिक के अर्थ हैं : जनता, लोक, जन, सार्वजनिक, राजकीय अर्थ में भी प्रयुक्त जैसे पब्लिक इकानामिक्स, का अर्थ राजकीय अर्थशास्त्र । अतः कमिशन के विचार में सरकारी स्कूलों के लिए एक समान तो रही है ऐसा लगता है ।

सेन्ट्रल एडवाइजरी बोर्ड आफ् एजुकेशन

प्रो. कोठारी की अध्यक्षता में एक कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम आफ् पब्लिक एजुकेशन पर सीएबीई की एक कमेटी बनी । इस कमेटी ने वरहुड स्कूल को प्रमोट करने, सरकारी स्कूलों में एजुकेशन की क्वालिटी को बढ़ाने और कॉमन स्कूल के लिए एक राष्ट्रीय कॉमन मिनिस्टर, स्वेचिड संस्थाओं के सदस्य, एनसोईआरटी. नीमा के, नीपा के निदेशक और योजना आयोग के व्यक्ति को बनाने की संस्तुति की ।

आचार्य राममूर्ति कमेटी

आचार्य राममूर्ति कमेटी ने कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम पर अपने विचार दिए । आचार्य राममूर्ति कमेटी के अनुसार, कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम के लागू न होने के कारण गरीबी-अमीरी, सरकारी स्कूलों का किरता स्तर, राजनीतिक इच्छा की कमजोरी अच्छे स्कूलों को बढ़ावा, अंग्रेजी माध्यम से पढ़ाने वाले स्कूलों को बोल-बाला, अल्पसंख्यकों को अपने स्कूल खोलने तथा अपनी इच्छानुसार शिक्षा देने, सैनिक स्कूल, नौसेना केन्द्रीय विद्यालय, नवोदय विद्यालय, सर्वोदय विद्यालय जैसे स्कूलों का उदय, आदि हैं ।

कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम को कार्यरूप देने के लिए निम्नलिखित कमेटी उपाय सुझाएँ ।

- प्रारंभिक & विशेषकर प्राथमिक शिक्षा के लिए आबंटन में भारी वृद्धि इससे मूलभूत सुविधाओं को बांछनीय स्तर तक लाने और शिक्षा को उपर उठाने में मदद मिलेगी । इस प्रकार सरकारी, स्थानीय निकाय और प्राप्त स्कूलों को सच्चे अर्थों में " पड़ोसी स्कूलों " में बदला जा सकेगा ।
- पिछड़े अंचलों, शहरी गंदी बस्तियों, आदिवासी क्षेत्रों, पर्वतीय इलाकों रेगिस्तानी और दलदली भू-भागों, सूख व बादग्रस्त क्षेत्रों, तटीय इलाकों और द्वीप समूहों स्कूलों तंत्र में सुधार लाने हेतु विशेष आबंटनों का प्रावधान

- प्राथमिक स्तर पर सभी के लिए, विशेषकर भाषाई अल्पसंख्यों के लिए, मातृभाषा के माध्यम से शिक्षा सुनिश्चित करना, माध्यमिक स्तर पर क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में शिक्षण को सक्रिय प्रोत्साहन देना, एवं मातृभाषा / क्षेत्रीय भाषा के माध्यम के अलावा अन्य माध्यम से शिक्षा दे रहे स्कूलों को सरकारी सहायता देना बंद करना ।
- सार्वजनिक स्कूल प्रणाली का चरणों में और 10 वर्ष की अवधि में समय निर्धारण कार्यक्रम के अनुसार क्रियान्वयन, एवं शुरूआती स्तरों पर बच्चों के प्रवेश हेतु चयन प्रक्रिया, द्यूशन फीस, कैपिटेशन फीस आदि व्यवस्थाओं को समाप्त करने के लिए न्यूनतम आवश्यक कानून का उपयोग ।
- खर्चीले विजी स्कूलों को सार्वजनिक स्कूल प्रणाली के दायरे में लाने की संभावनाओं की खोज करना । इसके लिए प्रोत्साहन देने, निरुत्साहित करने और कानून बनाने जैसे उपायों का इस्तेमाल किया जा सकता है ।

कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम नीति पर चर्चा

जैसा कि पहले कहा जा चुका है कि कोठारी आयोग ने कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम आफ पब्लिक एजुकेशन की अवधारणा प्रस्तुत की थी । पब्लिक एजुकेशन में सरकारी तथा सरकार से प्राप्त अनुदान से चलने वाले स्कूल आते हैं । इन स्कूलों में तो कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम एक प्रकार से लागू है । ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में तथा 90 % जनता के लिए तो कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम लागू है शहरी क्षेत्र में 10 % के लिए खुले स्कूल में एक कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम सा है । अच्छे-अच्छे स्कूलों का अपना एक सिस्टम है । उनमें एक कॉमन सिस्टम है । पर अच्छे और न अच्छे स्कूल में कुछ कॉमन है । अच्छे और न - अच्छे स्कूल में सर्वनिष्ठता आ जानी चाहिए । हम शायद यही चाहते हैं । पर हम जो चाहते हैं, वह नहीं हो पा रहा । दिल्ली के स्कूलों में भी एक क्षेत्र विशेष का बालक छ बालिका अपने माँ-बाप की आर्थिक स्थिति के अनुसार " अच्छे स्कूल " में दाखिला ले सकता है । सामान्य नियम है कि प्रत्येक माँ-बाप अपने बच्चों को " अच्छे स्कूल " में भेजना चाहता है । " अच्छे स्कूल " के लक्षण तो चर्चा से घिरे हैं ।

शिक्षा में विरोधाभास

आज शिक्षा में कई प्रकार के विरोधाभास हैं । सुविधा संपन्न लोगों के लिए और तरह की शिक्षा और सुविधा विहीन लोगों के लिए एक और तरह की शिक्षा । जहाँ न पेट भर भोजन है, न तन पर कपड़ा और सिर टकने के लिए छत, ऐसी हालत में शिक्षा का स्वरूप कैसा हो ।

समतावादी राष्ट्र के लिए समता आधारभूत है । समता सब बातों में चाहिए पर आज की परिस्थितियों में समता कैसे आए १ मूल भूत प्रश्न हैं १

शिक्षा का व्यावसायिकरण हो चुका है । एक गरीब के लिए और प्रकार की शिक्षा तथा एक अमीर के लिए और प्रकार की शिक्षा । शिक्षा अलग तरह की हो गई है । आज यह इस बात पर निर्भर है कि माँ-बाप की शिक्षा वरीदने की कितनी क्षमता है । भारत के अधिकांश के मन में गुरु गृह पढ़न गए रघुराई " संदीपन गुरु का आश्रम है । कुछ के मन में गुरु द्रोणाचार्य का आश्रम भी है । यही मतभेद कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम को लागू नहीं होने देता । पर प्रजातंत्र के लिए प्रजातांत्रिक स्वरूप से शिक्षा को देखना होगा । अतः देशहित में प्रजातंत्र के मूल सिद्धांतों का समावेश जरूरी है । प्रजातंत्र में सभी निवासियों को अपने भविष्य की सुनिश्चितता होनी चाहिए । सुनिश्चितता का प्रश्न जुड़ा है , जीवन -यापन की मूलभूत सुविधाओं से और ये प्रश्न आगे-आगे कई बातों से जुड़ते जाते हैं जैसे जीवन -यापन के लिए सुख-सुविधाओं रोटरी कपड़ा, मकान काम, व्यवसाय, मनोरंजन आदि । राजनीतिक और सांस्कृतिक सामाजिक क्षेत्रों में भी सभी को आगे बढ़ने के मौके मिलने चाहिए । सबको समान अवसर मिलें । सभी में सार्थक मूल्यों का पल्लवीकरण होना चाहिए जिसमें व्यक्ति समाज, स्थान आदि से ऊपर उठकर राष्ट्र का चिंतन कर सके । देश की अखंडता और एकता के लिए शिक्षा के स्वरूप को एक सा होना चाहिए एक सा होने से शिक्षा के प्रति सभी की चिंता, " शिक्षा लक्ष्यहीन होती जा रही है " संभव है दूर हो जाए ।

कॉमन क्या हो सकता है १

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा के ढाँचे की संरचना, विद्यालय में प्रचलित पाठ्यक्रम, शिक्षा सामग्री, शिक्षा साधना के रूप में, या नौकरी पाने के लिए साधन के रूप में । विश्वसनीयता, व्यापकता और सार्थकता पूर्ण मूल्यांकन में विद्यालयों के प्रमाण पत्र में शिक्षा का माध्यम, शिक्षा के उद्देश्य , अध्यापक की भूमिका, उत्साह राष्ट्र प्रेम , त्याग, व्यक्तित्व वेशभूषा, स्वाभाव विद्वता, वेतन सुविधाएँ । शारीरिक शिक्षा / योग शिक्षा / नैतिक शिक्षा /

शिक्षा में हम जब तक समानता की बात करते हैं तब धर्म, भाषा, धन आड़े आता है ।

सरकारी स्कूलों में स्थान, सामान आदि का अभाव है । और गैर सरकारी स्कूलों के सुविधाओं का अभाव नहीं है । 58-59 बच्चों के लिए एक ही अध्यापक सरकारी स्कूल में । ऐसे में क्या कॉमन हो सकता है ?

उपयुक्त विवेचन से, आज के युग में कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम को लागू करने के लिए - "नेवरहुड स्कूल संकल्पना" का क्रियान्वयन - विशेषकर शहरी क्षेत्रों में सभी तरह के स्कूलों में ।

- स्कूल संरचना-प्रशासनिक तथा एकेडमिक सभी क्षेत्रों में एक ही संस्था कोई भी हो उसे कॉमन स्कूल सिस्टम के लिए निर्धारित नियमों का पालन करना ।
- एकेडमिक क्षेत्र में- मूलभूत सामग्री शिक्षाक्रम का दक्षता आधारित होना दक्षता आधारित सामग्री के दक्षताएँ सर्वनिष्ठ हो सकती हैं । दक्षताओं निमित्त अनुभव अलग-अलग दिए जा सकते हैं । दक्षता आधारित सामग्री का निर्माण कुछ इस प्रकार से हो कि ज्यों-ज्यों सुविधाएँ स्कूल में स्थान, सुविधाएँ, अध्यापकों की संख्या, आदि बढ़ती जाएँ त्यों, त्यों उस सामग्री में अनुभवों को जोड़ते जाएँ तथा दक्षताओं का विकास जकाते जाएँ ।
- शिक्षा का माध्यम क्षेत्र विशेष की भाषा में मातृभाषा में तथा राज्य विशेष की भाषा में, कम से कम आठवीं कक्षा तक । विदेशी भाषा माध्यम तो बांछनीय नहीं लगता । विदेशी भाषा माध्यम से कामन सिस्टम नहीं बन सकेगा ।
- घरों की असमानताओं का स्कूलों में प्रदर्शित न हो, स्कूल में तो "एक समानता" का नियम लागू होना चाहिए । स्कूलिंग में तथा ड्रेस आदि में तो सर्वनिष्ठता आ सकती है ।

— त्रिभुवन लाल श्रीवास्तव

कहा गया है कि ज्ञान की व्याप्त ने मनुष्य की सम्यक्ता के विकास के नए सोपान निर्मित किए हैं, यह ज्ञान शिक्षा द्वारा देय है और शिक्षा वह है, जो अंतःफल में उतर जाए तथा ज्ञान और कर्म में सामंजस्य स्थापित कर दे। सामाजिक सामंजस्य की इसी अवधारणा से निःसृत है - सामान्य विद्यालयीय व्यवस्था की ^{परि-}कल्पना।

हम अभी इसे परिकल्पना ही कहें तो शायद ज्यादा बेहतर होगा, क्योंकि इस लक्ष्य तक पहुँचने के लिए हमें चिन्तन, आत्ममंथन और विचारों में बदलाव की उस प्रक्रिया से गुजरना होगा जो आवश्यक है। पॉल हेजार्ड ने कहा था - "पुस्तकें बच्चों को एक ऐसा सरल सौंदर्य दें जिसे वे सरलता से ग्रहण कर सकें और बच्चों की आत्मा में ऐसी भावना का संसार करें जो उनके जीवन में विरथायी बन जाए। वे प्राणिमात्र के प्रति अपने मन में आस्था जागृत करें और सहस्र तथा कर्म के प्रति आदर भाव बनाएँ।"

आज की हमारी शिक्षा-व्यवस्था में सबसे बड़ी कमी लक्षित हुई है, बदलावों के अनुरूप इसका उस तथे में न टल पाना। टी.वी. संस्कृति, पश्चिमी सम्यक्ता की चकाचौंध और महानगरों की भागती दौड़ती जिन्दगी में हमारे सरकारी विद्यालय आज कहीं फिट नहीं होते, क्योंकि उनमें लगभग आज भी वही स्थिति है, जो प्रसिद्ध कवि नागार्जुन ने लगभग पचासों वर्ष पहले इन शब्दों में बताई थी -

घुन खाये गहतीरों पर कि बारहखड़ी विधाता बधि ।

इसी तरह दुखहरन मास्टर गढ़ता है आदम के तथे ॥

इसके लिए प्रो. नामवर सिंह ने कहा था - दुखहरन मास्टर ऐसा क्यों करता है, यह उसकी तनखाह में से पूछिए। इतने वर्षों बाद "मास्टरों" की तनखाह में भले ही इजाफा हो गया है, गहतीरों पर घुन लगे या न लगे, किन्तु आज भी सरकारी स्कूलों में बहुत सारे बच्चे बैठने के स्थानउपलब्ध न होने के कारण कक्षाओं में पीछे खड़े रहने को मजबूर हैं, आज जबकि उमाना कम्प्यूटर, इन्टरनेट तक आ गया है, ऐसी दशा में हमारी पाठ्य-पुस्तकों के राम-रहीम और बुद्ध, कबीर अप्रासंगिक लगने लगे तो इसमें छात्रों का क्या दोष ?

भारत के इस सुदूर उत्तर-पूर्वी राज्य अरुणाचल में कई स्वयंसेवी संस्थाएँ § एन.जी.ओ. § हैं, जिनके द्वारा कई विद्यालय चलाये जाते हैं, इनमें से एक डोन्बो पोपो मिशन है । इसके द्वारा स्थापित डोन्बो पोपो विद्याभवन में परीक्षा - परिणाम शत-प्रतिशत तो होता ही है, इसके बिस् छात्रों के लिए फोटो ग्राफी तथा कम्प्यूटर जैसे कोर्स सामान्य हैं । सवाल है कि ऐसी दशा में जब यहाँ सरकारी उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालयों का परीक्षा-परिणाम लगभग 35 - 40 प्रतिशत हो रहा हो तो समर्थ अभिभावक सरकारी स्कूलों में बच्चे का दाखिला कराना क्यों चाहेगा और उक्त § विद्या-भवन से निकला हुआ छात्र आम जनता और गाँवों के अनबढ़ लोगों से क्या रिश्ता जोड़ पायेगा । अन्य राज्यों के मंत्रियों और विधायकों तथा आला-अफसरों की तरह यहाँ के लोगों के बच्चे भी राज्य के बाहर शिक्षा ग्रहण कर रहे हैं, ऐसी दशा में सरकारी स्कूलों का विकास कितना संभव है ? नतीजा यह है कि एक विश्वविद्यालय पाँच महाविद्यालयों और लगभग साठ उच्चतर माध्यमिक विद्यालयों एवं बाहर लाख की आबादी वाला यह राज्य शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में वह कुछ हासिल नहीं कर पा रहा है, जो इसे मिलना चाहिए था और लोगों का स्थान ऐसे विद्यालयों की तरफ हो रहा है, जो फीस के रूप में मोटी रकम तो वसूलते हैं पर जहाँ भेजकर अभिभावक को एक तरह की तसल्ली मिलती है कि उनका बच्चा बड़ा होकर किसी लाखक बन सकेगा । राज्य में और भी कई स्वयं-सेवी संस्थाएँ हैं जिनके द्वारा स्कूल चलाए जा रहे हैं । जैसे - रामकुल मिशन, और डगलस तथा अन्य ।

राज्य के कोटे से निर्धारित इंजीनियरिंग तथा मेडीकल की सीटों पर तथा प्रादेशिक सेवा के अधिकारी पदों पर अधिकतर इन्हीं प्राइवेट का कब्जा है, ऐसे में सामान्य छात्र के कुंठित होने की सारी संभावनाएँ मौजूद हैं ।

महात्मा गांधी शिक्षा को राष्ट्रीय -धारा से जोड़कर देखते थे उनका कहना था कि शिक्षा ऐसी हो जो व्यक्ति के शरीर, मस्तिष्क तथा आत्मिक शक्ति का समस्त विकास कर सके । आत्मिक शक्ति के विकास से उनका मतलब ऐसे विकास से था, जो समाज के अंतिम व्यक्ति तक पहुँचता हो । इसीलिए 9 जुलाई 1938 को अपने " हरिजन " में उन्होंने लिखा था - " मैं उच्च शिक्षा -व्यवस्था का शुत्र नहीं हूँ..... मेरी योजना के अनुसार अधिक इंजीनियर, विशेषज्ञ तैयार होंगे जो देश के वास्तविक सेवक होंगे तथा लोगों को उनके अधिकारों और कर्तव्यों के प्रति जागरूक करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएंगे तथा ये सारे विशेषज्ञ विदेशी भाषा में

नहीं बल्कि जनता से जनता को भाला में सँवाद स्थापित करेंगे उनके द्वारा।
प्राप्त किया गया ज्ञान जनता की सामूहिक संपत्ति होगा ।”

1964-66 की आयोग की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि “ भारतीय परिप्रेक्ष्य और परिस्थिति में यह शिक्षा -तंत्र की जिम्मेदारी है कि वह सामाजिक सामंजस्य तथा भिन्न-भिन्न सामाजिक व्यवस्थाओं वाले समूहों को साथ लेकर लगे, किन्तु वर्तमान समय में शिक्षा व्यवस्था में अनेक स्तरों पर विभेद है, प्राइवेट स्कूलों की बढ़ती संख्या, फीस बसूली तथा सनस के उच्च तबकों के अनुसार उनकी शिक्षा जरूरतों के लिए सोचना ऐसे ही उदाहरण हैं । बाकी सरकारी तथा सार्वजनिक एवंअपेक्षाकृत गरीब विद्यालयों का उपयोग समाज के अन्य तबकों द्वारा हो रहा है । ”

यदि इन बुराइयों को दूर करके हमें शिक्षा तंत्र को प्रभावी तथा शक्तिशाली बनाना है तो हमें “सामान्य -विद्यालयीय व्यवस्था ” के लक्ष्य की ओर बढ़ना होगा - जहाँ -

- जो शिक्षा - धर्म , जाति , वर्ग , आर्थिक आधारों की विभिन्नता के बावजूद सबके लिए खुली होगी ।
- जहाँ अच्छी शिक्षा प्राप्त करने का आधार धन अथवा स्तर नहीं बल्कि प्रतिभा होगी ।
- जहाँ सारे स्कूलों के लिए शिक्षा का एक ही मानक होगा तथा जहाँ उत्तम शिक्षा प्रदान करने की कोशिश की जाएगी ।
- जहाँ दूषण -फीस नहीं बसूली जाएगी ।
- जहाँ सामान्य स्तर के अभिभावकों और छात्रों की कठिनाईयों और जरूरत जरूरतों को ध्यान में रखा जाएगा ताकि उन्हें सँभलती सँभलती विद्यालयों का मुह न ताकना पड़े ।

सबके लिए शिक्षा की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित करने की ध्यान में रखकर

1968 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में कहा गया कि -

- शिक्षा उपलब्ध कराने के मामले में क्षेत्रीय असमानता दूर करने तथा अच्छी शिक्षा सुविधाओं को ग्रामोप तथा पिछड़े इलाकों तक पहुँचाने के लिए प्रयास होने चाहिए ।
- राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा रक्षता सामाजिक समानता की दिशा में बढ़ते रहने के लिए “ राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा आयोग द्वारा स्वीकृत ” सामान्य -विद्यालयीय व्यवस्था को अपनाना चाहिए । सामान्य -विद्यालयों में शिक्षा के स्तर को सुधारने की दिशा में प्रयास किए जाने चाहिए । सारे विशेष विद्यालयों

जैसे -पब्लिक स्कूलों को भी मेरिट के आधार पर अपने यहाँ छात्रों को प्रवेश देना चाहिए तथा समाज के उपेक्षित तबकों के छात्रों के लिए मुक्त-शिक्षा का भी एक अनुपात निर्धारित करना चाहिए ।

- छात्राओं की शिक्षा की तरफ ध्यान केवल सामाजिक न्याय को ध्यान में रखकर नहीं, बल्कि सामाजिक पुनर्निर्माण को ध्यान में रखकर दिया जाना चाहिए ।
- पिछड़े और आदिवासी छात्रों की शिक्षा हेतु और भी अधिक प्रयास होने चाहिए ।

1986 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति में कहा गया कि सामान्य विद्यालयों में शिक्षा के स्तर को सुधारने के लिए प्रयास किए जाने चाहिए, जिससे अभिभावक महंगे स्कूलों का मुह ताकने के लिए विवश न हों, महिलाओं अल्पसंख्यकों, आदिवासियों तथा समाज के अन्य पिछड़े तबकों तथा शारीरिक एवं मानसिक रूप से विकलांग छात्रों तथा ऐसे क्षेत्रों जहाँ के लिए विशेष ध्यान अपेक्षित है, शिक्षा-व्यवस्था सामाजिक आदर्शों तथा लोकतंत्र की उस दिशा के अनुरूप बढ़नी चाहिए , जिसका संविधान में उल्लेख है । ये कुछ ऐसेपैमाने हैं जिनके द्वारा हम " सामान्य -विद्यालयीय व्यवस्था " की ओर बढ़ सकते हैं और जिस पर 1964-66 के शिक्षा - आयोग द्वारा बहुत जोर दिया गया है तथा जिससे हम आज भी बहुत दूर हैं ।"

आने वाली सदी बच्चों की होगी । ऐसे भी भारत में बच्चों की संख्या पैंतालीस लाख के आस-पास है, जितनी कि कुछ देशों की जनसंख्या भी नहीं है । इसलिए हमें इस दायित्व के प्रति गंभीर होना चाहिए ।

वर्ग-विभेद की इस बढ़ती खाई को रोकने का उपाय है, शिक्षा -बजट में वृद्धि, सरकारी और सामान्य स्कूलों के पाठ्यक्रम तथा जरूरतों को समय की मांग के अनुसार ढालना तथा अत्यन्त महंगे स्कूलों को अपनी धन-उगाही कम करने के लिए बाध्य करना । अन्यथा तबके लिए अच्छी शिक्षा मूल-मारीचिका ही ब्रह्म साबित होगी ।

